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AFTER THE INSANITY that was E3, it was nice to get back into a regular routine. After working so hard we thought we'd reward ourselves with a few games of *FIFA World Cup*. Then we had an awesome idea, let's see if we can predict who will win the World Cup! And thus the Wi-Fi World Cup was born, but it wasn't just an excuse to sit around playing games, oh no, it was an important experiment that needed to be conducted. As for the final... well, you'll have to read the feature to find out which proud nation lifted the cup at the end of it all.

Anyway, believe it or not, we did get some work done over the month and as you've probably guessed by the cover, we're the first ones to bring you exclusive news and screenshots of *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops*, the first proper *Metal Gear* game on PSP. Have a glance and you'll see that it's shaping up to be one of the greatest PSP games yet.

Speaking of great PSP games, we've also looked at some of the rumours surrounding the next *Grand Theft Auto* instalment and examined just what you might find in the neon-lit streets of Vice City. Some of it might surprise you.

Enough of the future, the here and now is just as important, especially with the release of the highly anticipated *LocoRoco*. We won't tease, it's just as good as we hoped and those lovable blobs should help sell even more PSPs and show Nintendo who really rules the handheld market.

Enjoy the issue and make sure you come back next month for yet more **Go>Play** exclusives.

Simon Griffin, Deputy Editor

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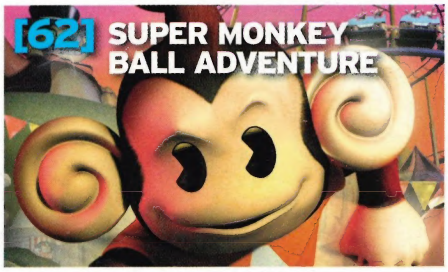

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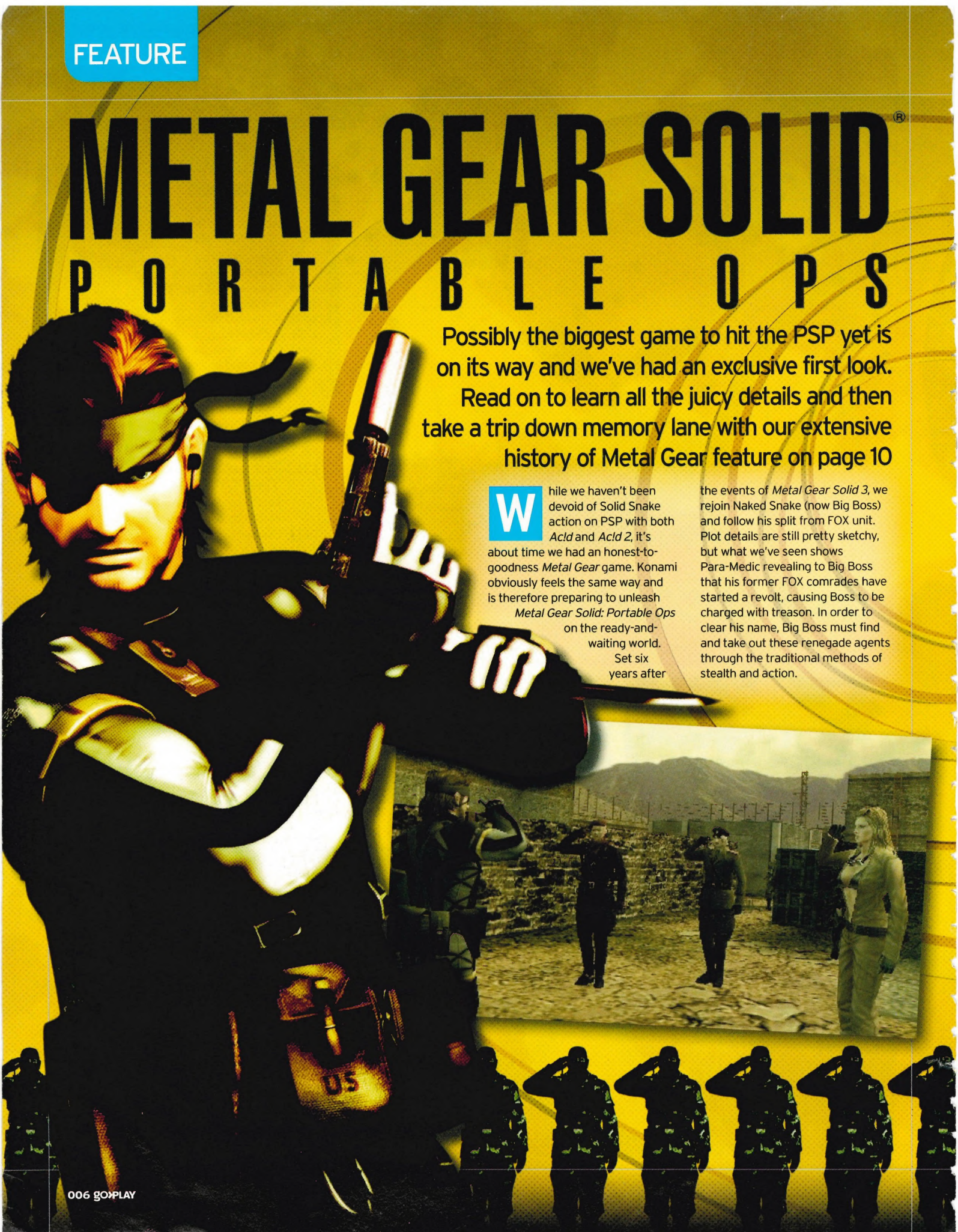
METAL GEAR SOLID®
PORTABLE OPS

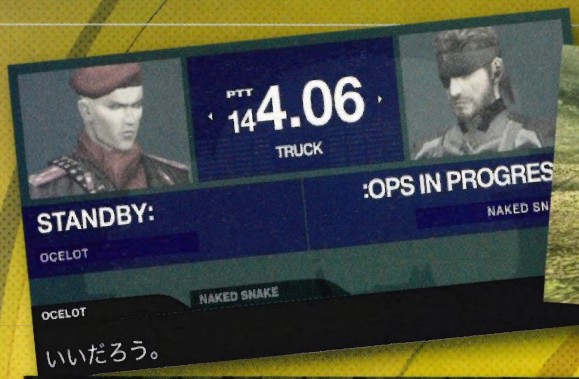
Possibly the biggest game to hit the PSP yet is on its way and we've had an exclusive first look. Read on to learn all the juicy details and then take a trip down memory lane with our extensive history of Metal Gear feature on page 10

While we haven't been devoid of Solid Snake action on PSP with both *Acid* and *Acid 2*, it's about time we had an honest-to-goodness *Metal Gear* game. Konami obviously feels the same way and is therefore preparing to unleash *Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops* on the ready-and-waiting world. Set six years after the events of *Metal Gear Solid 3*, we rejoin Naked Snake (now Big Boss) and follow his split from FOX unit. Plot details are still pretty sketchy, but what we've seen shows Para-Medic revealing to Big Boss that his former FOX comrades have started a revolt, causing Boss to be charged with treason. In order to clear his name, Big Boss must find and take out these renegade agents through the traditional methods of stealth and action.



This mission gives the opportunity to recruit a group of NPC soldiers to aid your cause and it looks like this will be the early beginning of Foxhound, the organisation seen in previous *Metal Gear* games. The NPCs have a variety of skills and you can pick and choose who you recruit depending on your style of play. It seems like the main motivation behind the plot is to give Big Boss some background and explain his descent into treachery and evil and the rise of Outer Heaven that was first encountered in the original *Metal Gear* game.

The plot is all well and good, but as far as *Metal Gear* goes you either love the storyline or hate it. Whatever camp you sit in it's still easy to appreciate the gameplay, which is what we were most interested in sampling. You'll be pleased to hear that *Portable Ops* plays just like its PS2 predecessors, with all the sneaking and stealth that we know and love. You can still hug walls and peek out, which is now done with the Triangle button. Pressing this button while walking will also make you sneak. The decision to set the controls up in this manner is most likely due to the fact that the PSP analog nub just doesn't have the range or accuracy to allow for the control of different movement speeds, which is so important in this game. The ability to fire your weapon from either first- or third-person perspectives is still present, but as ever you can't move while in first-person mode. However, switching between these modes is done with a simple press of the shoulder button. Switching between weapons is quick and easy too and there's a pleasing number of weapons to choose from too, with the standard silenced pistol, machine gun, sniper rifle and grenades on offer. Everything >



works just like it does on PS2, so *Metal Gear* veterans should have no problem picking it up. Apart from weapons, close-quarter combat moves are also included, which are very handy if you find yourself unexpectedly running into an enemy and don't have enough time to draw your weapon.

While the single-player looks great, it's the multi-player that we've really got our teeth into. It provides both ad hoc and infrastructure for up to four players and is similar in nature to the online mode found in *Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence*. Modes include a two-on-two team deathmatch and a traditional all-on-all deathmatch that will test your sneaking skills to the max. A new feature added to aid you in your Wi-Fi battle is the introduction of a new radar. However, this doesn't show up the positions of enemies and instead is based around sound. As you move around the centre part, the radar scrambles to represent the noise you're making. The same effect will happen when enemies move and fire around you, giving away their position. This makes things a great deal more interesting than just having a more traditional style of radar and gives the multiplayer

modes a far more tactical feel and will certainly put gung-ho players at a disadvantage.

Another interesting and useful addition to the multi-player is the appearance of a kerotan frog above the head of the player who is in the lead. Not only is this a visual aid but it also lets out a croak every few seconds, which will obviously show up on your radar and give away the location of the leader. This allows less skilled players to at least have a chance of getting some kills in.

For players who can't take the heat, a 'White Flag' system has been implemented that allows you to surrender so you can live to fight the next round rather than get killed and sit out for the rest of the game. This will give a real tactical edge as you give up in one round then regroup and come back stronger in the next.

One thing that really stood out in the multi-player was the framerate and how unbelievably smooth it is. We didn't encounter any slow down, which is impressive considering how nice the game looks. The character models easily stand up to the PS2 version and all the environments are beautifully rendered. The cut-scenes are also great to look at and take the same comic book style that will be seen in the forthcoming *Digital Graphic Novel*.

While the code we played is far from perfect, it's easy to see the potential that *Portable Ops* has. Issues such as collision detection problems that we encountered are to be expected from code this early and there is still plenty of development time left to make this the perfect *Metal Gear* experience we're certain it will be. ■

PRECIOUS METAL

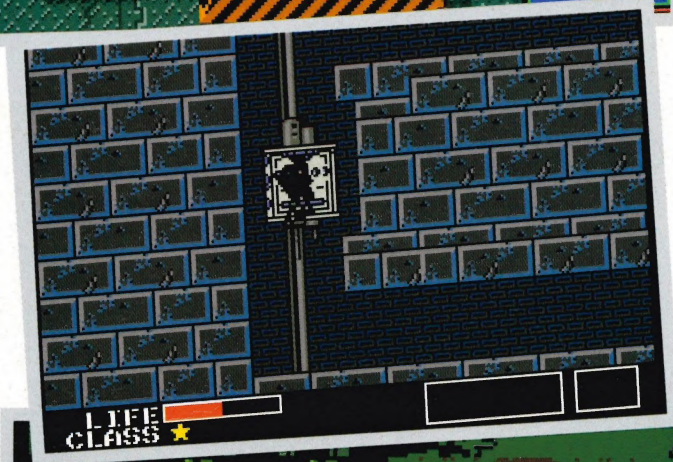
Story: John Szczepaniak

With Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops heading to PSP, what better time to look back at the history of one of gaming's most popular franchises?

It is perhaps fitting that *Metal Gear*, one of the games industry's biggest and most popular franchises, should have a history as convoluted and shrouded in half-truths as the very story that it tells.

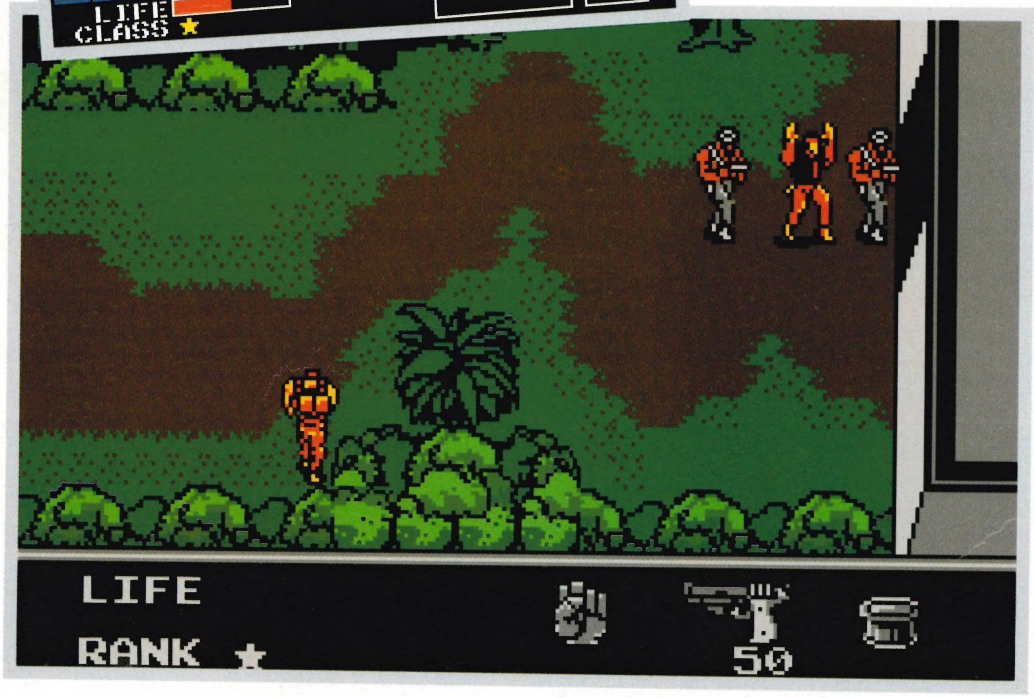
The true birth of the series was in 1987 when Hideo Kojima was asked to make a new combat game for the MSX. Due to hardware restrictions, he chose to create one that eschewed intense action in favour of a more stealthy approach, coupled with a high-quality plot. *Metal Gear* was fairly successful, with cell-based gameplay rather like the *Zelda* games, except instead of attacking mindless enemies, the player had to think up different strategies for each room. As a result, it was almost puzzle-based with each 'cell' having its own strategic obstacles. You had to take a different path through each while altering the timing of movement, and occasionally had to use special items in order to move on. Ardent fans of the original will attest to completing the game without ever needing the handguns or health rations provided, except for during boss battles, which made for a perfectly balanced blend of stealth and occasional blasting. Even today it stands up in terms of gameplay, with a beautifully cohesive simplicity. It also showed that games can have genuinely engaging narratives involving greed, loss, deceit and betrayal.

[A more stealthy approach, coupled with a high-quality plot]



Due to strong market forces, the Japanese MSX title was translated and brought to Europe. Although many gamers considered the game had been butchered – 40 per cent of the 155 transceiver messages were lost in order to speed up translation – it was a far superior effort than the appalling American NES localisation that would later follow.

With the growing popularity of the Famicom in Japan, Konami saw the potential for higher sales, and so mere months later *Metal Gear* was ported, though not without a few major alterations. The water-based introduction was replaced by heavy jungle (unusual, considering



◀ ***Snake's Revenge*** **may have been disowned by some Kojima fans, but it's an essential addition to the series**

The MSX boss (top) was a huge Hind helicopter, replaced by two pathetic gunmen in the NES version

the game was set in South Africa), an impossible maze was added and the actual *Metal Gear* robot was removed completely. Such alterations to Kojima's original vision would eventually come to be accepted as normal by the gaming masses, since the new Famicom version became the most ported game in the entire series, appearing on the NES, C64, PC, Amiga (unreleased) and eventually even the GameCube (to coincide with the Japanese release of *Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes*). Despite modern criticisms of such changes, the core gameplay remained faithful to the original. Some veterans of the series chose to simply regard it as a remixed version of the original – not as pure, but not without merit either. Regardless, the two games are different enough to warrant fans playing through each of them individually, yet similar enough to be enjoyed equally.

Examination of the Japanese Famicom instruction manual shows that the storyline remained intact from the original, unlike the aberration that was to become the English-language NES version. Rather than Konami adapting the already translated European MSX manual to suit the NES version (since the Japanese MSX and Famicom manuals were nearly identical anyway), which would have saved not only work, but the integrity of the series, Konami USA chose to rewrite it completely. This would have been fine had it not been written by someone with little or no grasp of the game. Or English. The rewritten manual bore no resemblance to either the MSX or Famicom versions, was poorly written, immature and made a mockery of the hard work invested in it by Kojima. It would be easy to relegate this all too common tale of poor western localisation to the annals of history, were it not for the fact that such tripe went on to spawn not only the many aforementioned ports, but also a short novel (see boxout).

Despite so much ongoing dilution, the subsequent ports of the NES game remain playable and fairly accurate to the gameplay concepts that graced the first game, which can only be a testament to the great strength and refined purity of design in Kojima's original.

Second Gear

With the game's success in America it was inevitable that a sequel would follow, and so development of *Snake's Revenge* started. However, from here confusion ensues as to the true nature of the titles that followed. Despite unfair and excessive western condemnation of it, Kojima himself has categorically stated that he likes *Snake's Revenge* and regards it as being faithful to the *Metal Gear* concept. Kojima tells the story of where he bumped into a colleague from a different department at Konami who was working on *Snake's Revenge* and who mentioned the project, but said he knew it was not a real *Metal Gear* game. It was this encounter that motivated Kojima to create the true successor on the MSX2 (*Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake*), which was released after *Snake's Revenge*. So in effect, the existence of the much-loved and highly praised official sequel – and ›

Metal Gear Sellout

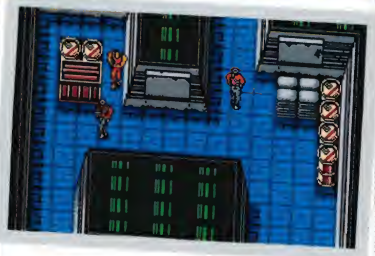
Some people say Metal Gear games are like literature. Not in this case...

One of the more curious *Metal Gear* spin-offs is the 1990 book *Worlds Of Power: Metal Gear*, published in the US by Scholastic. Being based exclusively on what the author read in the American manual of the NES version, the book was never going to be a work of genius. On top of that, as the book was aimed squarely at children, all question of violence or gunplay was ruled out – Justin Halley (as Snake was now known) carried guns, he just never used them. These days, the book is generally regarded as low quality (come to think of it, it must have been seen as pretty naff 15 years ago) and is generally of interest to only the most obsessive collectors.

Artistic licence? Don't be silly

Need to sell a game in a hurry? Quick – Call Michael Biehn!

There's nothing worse than buying the latest film or TV tie-in game only to find that the in-game characters have very little in common with the actors who portrayed them on the big screen. This is mainly due to most of the big players having contracts in place to ensure that their images cannot be used in videogames without their express permission (although we can't see how even the inclusion of Will Smith in *Bad Boys II* would have made it a better game). Once upon a time, though, it was very different and companies like Konami and Capcom exploited this situation to the full. Is that Sean Connery giving you your instructions in Carrier Air Wing? And why is Michael Biehn (in complete Kyle Reese get-up) on the front cover of *Metal Gear*? Easy, it didn't cost Konami a penny, was a great way to drum up interest in a game and gave you a well-known actor to associate with. If only games were like this now...



> possibly even continuation of the series from there – is thanks mainly to *Snake's Revenge*.

Apart from Kojima not being involved in its development, the reasons for gamers' misguided hatred of *Snake's Revenge* are threefold. First was the unnecessary addition of side-scrolling stages (included to appease action-hungry American NES gamers). Then, while the in-game story read like a *Metal Gear* game, its manual fell victim to the same silly nonsense as the previous one. Thirdly, the opening stage was incredibly difficult, meaning few players ever managed to experience the full game, which was genuinely fun and in fact more faithful to Kojima's vision than the original Famicom port.

Snake's Revenge was developed for the NES but more as a sequel to the MSX original. Unlike the previous NES version, it featured limited bullet range, higher guard alert levels, the ability to gain rations from stealth kills and, most importantly of all, two different models of *Metal Gear* to destroy. It also contained many elements that would appear in later instalments of the series, such as a combat knife, shotgun, searchlights, microphone and even a ship filled with *Metal Gear* models. Despite living in the shadow of Kojima's true sequel, it does have its own merits that only become apparent after extended play. *Snake's Revenge* certainly deserves to take its place in history alongside other *Metal Gear* games.

Gear shift

Snake's Revenge also spawned a rare collectible that was the series' first foray into handheld gaming. In 1990, Tiger Electronics released the *Snake's Revenge* handheld

LCD game as part of its Game Talk range. This would not be the last time Tiger would be connected to the *Metal Gear* universe – the official catalogue for its handheld system, **game.com**, listed *Metal Gear Solid* as a future release, but it never materialised. Speculation based on the few screenshots in existence says it would have been a watered down port of the PSone title though.

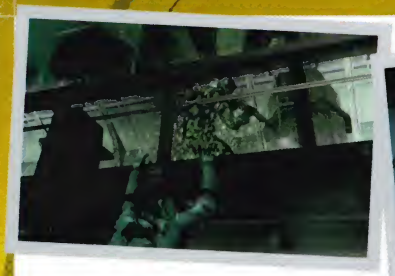
Obscure handheld versions don't end there, though. In 2000, a fan coded a homebrew game – *Metal Gear Stealth* – for the Dreamcast's VMU. A pity, then, that the gameplay consisted of only pressing one of three directions to avoid guards. Regarding other merchandise, in Japan there is quite literally everything from novelty shot glasses and action figures to bottles of wine and even entire multi-volume radio-plays that build on the game's existing storyline.

Not too long after the release of *Snake's Revenge*, the MSX2 was graced by what many still regard as the pinnacle of the entire series: *Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake*. The cult status of this one game is so phenomenal that countless websites have sprung up as shrines to it, showcasing everything from characters resembling actors to the apparent inspiration drawn from the military action novel *Crossfire*. There is no mistaking the quality of this title; it contains the best elements from all other *Metal Gear* games (including even *Metal Gear Solid* on the PlayStation), in addition to exclusive content. The use of the famous Hanoi Hilton tap code, carrier pigeons, different ration varieties and hang-gliding have yet to be seen again. It also had influential characters who would later return, such as Campbell, Miller and, of course, Gray Fox, Snake's friend and arch-rival who eventually became the Ninja. Experiencing this defining game adds far greater gravitas to everything seen in later iterations, and only then can you really understand why, when the Ninja dies, people are actually moved to tears.

[When the **Ninja dies**, people are actually moved to tears]

Had magazines back in the day examined history, they would have been able to accurately predict perhaps over half the content of *Metal Gear Solid*, the first 3D incarnation of the series and one of the best-selling games on the PSone. It contained key events from all previous games – the watery intro and Hind D boss of the MSX original, the spotlights of *Snake's Revenge*. Vast sections were lifted straight from *Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake* – stairway chases, curing colds, shape-changing alloys and optic-camo were just some of the things that Japanese gamers had experienced eight years previously. It was also not the first (and certainly not the last) time that Kojima's fantasy of entering women's toilets would be addressed.

In the end, *Metal Gear Solid* played almost like a remake of *Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake*, albeit with an updated plot and scenario, which is no bad thing considering its incredibly high quality. Furthermore, many of the boss battles were inspired by encounters in previous games. Though the names were changed, there is no mistaking the similarity between, for example, Machine Gun Kid and Vulcan Raven, in both design and the methods needed to defeat them. All of this ingrained re-use of content, found throughout the series, is not a sign of lazy design; in fact, it ›



shows just how finely crafted and well integrated the world inside Kojima's mind is. All of his games are linked in some way: Snatcher has numerous *Metal Gear* references, and Policenauts even has an adult Meryl as a leading character. None of Kojima's craftsmanship would be lost, since *Metal Gear Solid* was perhaps the first time that a *Metal Gear* game received not only a proper and accurate translation, but extra features not found in the Japanese release too. It also introduced gamers to VR missions that later resulted in an add-on disc featuring over a hundred extra bonus missions.

With momentum gaining, next in the production line would be the overdue appearance of Solid Snake on a Game Boy. *Ghost Babel* also lost the cell-based structure that was once the trademark of the series in favour of more expansive areas. Backtracking was also removed thanks to the implementation of progressive stages. Despite this, it is still regarded as one of the Game Boy Color's crowning moments and a worthy addition to the roster as the first true handheld *Metal Gear* title (which also included the first two-player mode in a *Metal Gear* game and extra hidden plotlines).

This brings us full circle, as in recent years Konami has released handheld ports of both MSX games for Japanese mobile phones, complete with gameplay additions and only minor cosmetic changes. This bodes well for the future and the potential of an English port to modern handhelds, or even a compilation disc for current consoles similar to the Famicom version available on GameCube. One can only hope, since the excellent older *Metal Gear* games have been ignored for far too long.

Mainstream acceptance

The PSone release had re-birthed the franchise into the modern 3D era, and with it, instilled a degree of international mainstream acceptance. Though it would seem those in charge of Europe never fully understood the games, since legend has it that executives at the time were furious after seeing the hand painted cover art and demanded it be replaced with CG images. Thankfully it wasn't though, and so unlike America, Europe was graced with Yoji Shinkawa's sumptuous artwork.

Such was the (deserved) success of the game, that immediately rumours began surfacing that claimed Konami had also been working on Saturn and N64 versions. The former was allegedly cancelled after Sony paid huge sums to ensure it was a PSone exclusive; while the latter rumour came about simply because magazines made a mistake when printing release lists, possibly as a result of Konami announcing *Hybrid Heaven* for the N64. In an ironic twist, *MGS* would actually appear on Sega's Dreamcast courtesy of bleemcast!.

With future success ensured after the PSone and GBC releases, it was inevitable that a PS2 sequel would be made and the ensuing hysteria was palpable. Hype production went into overdrive with all manner of increasingly wild claims being made about the game, and how it would utilise the revolutionary power of PS2's 'emotion engine'. Such was the anticipation, *Metal Gear Solid 2: Son's Of Liberty* became the key reason to buy a PS2, so when a playable demo was bundled with *Zone Of The Enders*, countless people bought it for that disc alone.

After a late 2001 release the reactions were mixed, and *MGS2*

has become a point of contention among fans. Some proclaimed it as the second coming, while others were furious and accused Kojima of betraying them. The first chapter aboard the oil tanker was praised, but many were disappointed with controlling the bishounen character Raiden throughout the second chapter, and also the unrealistic zany antics that followed. However, the improved gameplay was popular enough to warrant a GameCube remake of *MGS* using the *MGS2* engine, subtitled *The Twin Snakes* (this in itself had its problems, and is considered by some to be inferior to the original).

It is a mistake to have this attitude though, since the *Metal Gear* series has never been about cold steely realism, like the *Splinter Cell* games for example. It has always been about over-the-top, morally ambiguous, and deranged Hollywood-style feats of heroism. Kojima is after all not human but 70% films, if you believe his interview answers. The effeminate Raiden; an arm that possesses its owner (taken directly from the 1991 Eric Red film, *Body Parts*); a vampire who walks on water; – these things are all to be expected when you entrust development to Hideo Kojima. They are no more surreal than bipedal nuclear tanks, shamanic Indians, or a fat guy that shoots bees out of his mouth (all being elements from the more happily accepted instalments). Although perceived as 'out of place', it is in fact the occasionally jarring fantasy elements that define and make the *Metal Gear* games what they are. Indeed, these games are much more refreshing and exciting than so many other cliché-ridden stealth adventures that we've had to endure over the years.

Despite this, many still complained. Whether it was because of public demand, or perhaps his own desires to explore and better explain his creations, Kojima shifted focus with *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*, released in late 2004. He also infamously told Tim Rogers in **GamesTM** that this was his last game in the series, a promise Kojima never kept. Arguably brilliant news, since it's pretty unlikely that anyone else could have continued the series while maintaining his same degree of flamboyance.

[Metal Gear has never been about cold steely realism]

While players again did not control Solid Snake, they did adopt the role of the man he would later be cloned from, Big Boss. The gravitas of this was unfortunately mostly lost on Western gamers, since having played through the first two MSX titles (especially the 2nd) which sees you fighting Big Boss, the story of Snake Eater takes on a whole new dimension. It explains how a country's greatest and most patriotic soldier is deceived and betrayed by his own people, to the point of forsaking his own country, eventually breaking from both them and himself (chillingly echoing the descent into madness of Colonel Kurtz in *Apocalypse Now*, which again reinforces the obvious love of films that Kojima has). This is why later on Solid Snake has to infiltrate Outer Heaven, and then later still Zanzibar Land, in order to put an end to his clone father's malevolent insanity. There is no stark separation between good and evil, as allies and enemies switch roles with abandon. History also repeats itself, since in

> later iterations it would seem that both Snake and Raiden are on the same path of deception and anti-establishment destruction that Big Boss was on previously.

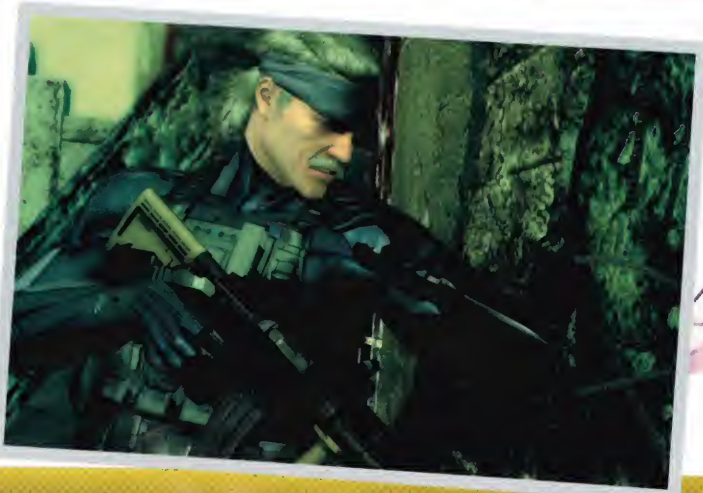
While the subversive elements may have gone over the heads of those playing *MGS3*, it was critically acclaimed and hailed as a return to form. Kojima had certainly delivered on his promises of having unique gameplay, again keeping it ahead of its rivals. One hunted animals for food in order to stave off hunger and aid the recovery of health; while after fighting battles injuries had to be worked on *Rambo* style, with bullets removed, wounds cauterised, and cuts stitched closed with a needle and thread. It was a game as much about basic survival as it was about taking on a group of freakish, rogue WWII militants. In a moment of irony it also included several elements from *Snake's Revenge*, such as the ability to interrogate guards, a shotgun, jungle enemies travelling on flying platforms, and orange camouflage.

Just over a year later, Konami released a special *Subsistence* version, which was the second title to include a multi-player mode (this time online). It also came with inside interviews, a theatre disc, and finally, an English translation of the MSX's *Metal Gear 2*. It took Konami 16 long years to translate this into English, while the Dutch had unofficially done it in only seven (the fan translation was released in 1997). Despite the wait it is still highly enjoyable, and almost worth buying *Subsistence* for alone.

[Every Sony games system has had a Metal Gear game]

Every Sony games system has had a *Metal Gear* game (bearing in mind the MSX was also co-developed by Sony, being their very first foray into games hardware), so it therefore came as no surprise that the PSP would launch with *Metal Gear Acid*. Technically it's not considered to be an official canon – more of an alternate universe – and it also eschewed hands-on action in favour of a unique card-based gameplay system. However, it was still a fantastic addition to the PSP games roster, and was certainly popular enough to warrant its recently released sequel. There are also plans for two additional PSP *Metal Gear* games, including a graphic novel, and *Portable Ops*, which is intended to be action based and fully integral to the game's official storyline.

The next console instalment, *Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns Of The Patriots* on PS3, isn't with us yet, but again expectations are high. So far, we know only a little: Snake now wears a moustache, is much older, and requires injected medication. The game even features some exciting fan-service in the form of the miniature *Metal Gear* robot from *Snatcher*, who acts as a sidekick to Snake. Also, Kojima has openly stated that it could run on the Xbox 360 quite easily, casting doubts over Sony's exclusivity. However, all of these points only open the floodgates to further speculation and unfortunately, we'll have to wait for 2007 to discover what surprises Kojima really has in store.



Years of the Snake

Solid Snake has been completing missions for nearly 18 years – here's a comprehensive list of what he's been up to

1987:
Metal Gear (JPN/UK) - MSX
Metal Gear (JPN) - Famicom

1988:
Metal Gear (USA) - NES

1989:
Metal Gear (UK) - NES

1990:
Snake's Revenge (USA) - NES
Snake's Revenge (USA) - Tiger LCD Handheld
Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake (JPN) - MSX2
Metal Gear (USA) - C64
Metal Gear (USA) - IBM PC
Metal Gear: Worlds of Power (USA) - Short novel by Alexander Frost (Scholastic)

1991:
Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake Original Soundtrack (CD)

1992:
Snake's Revenge (UK) - NES

1997:
Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake (MSX2) English translation patch released

1998:
Metal Gear Solid Demo (USA) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid (JPN/USA) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid Premium Package (JPN) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid Stockholder Commemoration Edition Premium Package (JPN) - PS1
MGS Drama CD Vol.1 (JPN - Radio Play)
Metal Gear Solid commemorative wine

1999:
Metal Gear Solid (EU) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid Limited Edition Premium Package (EU) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid Integral (JPN) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid: VR Missions (USA/EU) - PS1
MGS Drama CD Vol.2 (JPN - Radio Play)

2000:
Metal Gear Solid: Konami the Best (JPN) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid Integral: Konami the Best (JPN) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid (US/EU) - PC
Metal Gear Solid (Integral) - PC
Metal Gear: Ghost Babel (JPN) - GBC
Metal Gear Solid (USA/EU) - GBC
Metal Gear Stealth (homebrew) - Dreamcast VMU

2001:
bleem! Metal Gear Solid (US/EU) - Dreamcast
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty Trial Edition (US) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty Premium Package (JPN) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty Stockholder Commemoration Edition (JPN) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty (JPN/US/EU) - PS2

2002:
Metal Gear Solid: PSone Books (JPN) - PS1
The Document of Metal Gear Solid 2 (JPN/US) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (JPN) PS2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (US) - XBOX

2003:
Metal Gear Solid Integral: PSone Books (JPN) - PS1
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (US/EU) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (US/EU) - PC
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance: PlayStation2 the Best (JPN) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance (EU) - XBOX

2004:
Metal Gear (MSX) English translation patch released
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance: Konami Dendou Collection (JPN) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes (JPN/US/EU) - NGC
Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes Premium Package (JPN) - NGC
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (JPN/US) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater Premium Package (JPN) - PS2
Metal Gear (JPN) - Mobile Phone
Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake (JPN) - Mobile phone
Metal Gear Acid (JPN) – PSP

2005:
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater (EU) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence (JPN) - PS2
Metal Gear Ac!d (US/EU) - PSP
Metal Gear Ac!d (Konami the best) (JPN) - PSP
Metal Gear Ac!d 2 (JPN) - PSP

2006:
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater Platinum (EU) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence (US/EU) - PS2
Metal Gear Solid 3: Subsistence Limited Edition (US) - PS2
Metal Gear Ac!d 2 (US/EU) - PSP

Still To Be Released:
2006:
Metal Gear Solid: Digital Graphic Novel (EU/US) - PSP
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops (JPN) - PSP

2007:
Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots (JPN/US/EU) - PS3
Metal Gear Solid: Portable Ops (US/EU) - PSP

UNRELEASED:
Metal Gear - Amiga
Metal Gear Solid - Tiger game.com

INSIDER

ALL THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE WORLD OF PSP GAMING

BREAKING NEWS

LOCATION, LOCATION,

LocationFree gets out and about

Nobody really seems to know what all this LocationFree gumpf is about. We all know it involves watching TV on the move, and we also know that it requires the plugging in of a chunky base unit, but past that the details are a little sketchy. What's the deal then? Is this something that'll revolutionise your TV viewing habits, or is it merely a stepping stone to other technologies? At first glance it seems like a gimmick created to draw in those cash-laden early adopters, but what about after closer inspection? Well, at a recent press event we had the chance of getting to see exactly what this LocationFree deal has to offer.

Skeptics have cited the LocationFree system as being a rather pointless exercise: the merging of all this technology just to watch *Eastenders* while you're on holiday isn't worth the expense and hassle of the LocationFree system. In reality however, it's not a great hassle, and its application is wider than we initially thought.

The LocationFree system comprises three parts. The Base Station unit is the bit that does all the work, blasting out your favourite soap into your handheld telly box whether you're at the end of the garden watching the football or stuck in a Turkish prison being abused by twelve bearded men. The IR Blaster is the add-on that allows you to access the AV devices as if you were at home by emulating your remote control's signal. Clever. The third and final part of this assemblage is your PSP. Correctly configured, it's a simple matter of finding a suitably strong Wi-Fi signal and pressing a few buttons. Again, clever.

Whilst up to eight devices (including PCs, laptops, palmtops, PDAs and of course, PSPs) can be hooked up to the LocationFree Base unit, only one can actually be in use at any one time. This isn't a major problem, but one that seems to limit the options for those really wishing to go to town with the system. To be honest though, that's the only niggle we've noticed. Upon setting the gear up, you're unlikely to receive optimum performance from it, but some small tweaks later and you have a picture and sound quality comparable to that of any UMD. Indeed, once it's all set up with Sony's new Dynamic Variable Bit Rate technology, your images are being

LOCATION

constantly optimised based on the availability of the bandwidth no matter where you are.

Predictably gushy about the product, Jonathan White – GM of TV and Home Video Business Group, Sony UK, said "The great thing about LocationFree is that it does two things at once. It kicks open the door of the TV room and lets people out, but at the same time it can bring that sense of familiarity and comfort to anyone who is away on the road. Essentially it breaks down boundaries, as all good communications technologies should." This is a surprisingly accurate description of the system. The ability to record shows, set up camera or surveillance systems and watch your own DVD movies adds to the range of applications, and with an enthusiasm typical of Sony's marketing machine, we've been told that this is merely the start of something truly revolutionary. The LocationFree kits should be in shops now for £229.99 and we'll be getting our grubby hands on one and putting it through its paces next month, so watch this space for more news and features on the mobile TV uprising.

FIGHT
RACE
BATTLE
MANOEUVRE
KILL

20 ALL TIME CLASSICS ON PSP™
MULTI-PLAYER WIRELESS GAMING,
REMASTERED GRAPHICS,
AS INSANELY ADDICTIVE
AS YOU REMEMBER.

IT ALL KICKS OFF (AGAIN)
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PlayStation Portable
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OUR MAN ON THE CLAPHAM OMNIBUS

REPETITIVE BRAIN INJURY

A chilling look at the myriad of dangers and pitfalls inherent in PSP gaming

So back from holiday, and reasonably well rested, our little jolly has had the desired effect. We went, we sampled foreign food, avoided the dangerous minefield of amoebic dysentery, soaked up enough sun and red wine to last us a lifetime and came back with the bare minimum of raffia-ware gifts. Dunno about you, but I'd call that a success. So it's back to the mundane grind of daily life, but somehow life's that much more agreeable than before our little jaunt.

So as I lay on my sofa, at the end of a long day's typing, gaming and ball scratching, I reach for my mental bubble bath and wind down with a few rounds of *SSX: On Tour*. Halfway down the piste I feel a twinge. Ouch. I'm in some discomfort. When something starts hurting me I generally tend to wince, scream, generally overreact in every way possible, make a great fuss and signal to everyone in the room that I'm not okay – something it's very important to make people aware of, I feel. Great shots of lightning shoot down my arm (not literally, that'd be an almost biblical grade of pain) and settle malevolently around my left thumb, causing my hand to start spasming like a half-dead fish. Once I'd elicited the requisite amount of sympathy from my girlfriend and shuffled her off to sort me out some dinner it was time to get down to the business of working out what this horrible pain was.

Of course, the first thing to do when you encounter a pain of indefinable origin is to start poking, fingering and prodding the area concerned with the persistence of a two year old in the vicinity of a sweet shop. That was pretty much my evening sorted, slathering my wrist with all manner of deep heat, cooling packs and herbal remedies, whilst constantly rubbing the affected area. However, this did little to soothe the pain, so next morning it was down to the doc's to see what he had to say about the matter.

"Well, it appears you have a rather nasty RSI, I'll refer you to a specialist" grumbles the overworked GP before suggesting I sue someone and ushering me out of his office to make way for a profoundly wrinkled old lady with what appeared to be a cheese grater stuck up her rear. Unfortunate. Off I toddled then, to this so-called specialist. Turns out however, that there's little chance of seeing said physiotherapist this side of the next millennium – although I do get to have a half hour flirt-off with his receptionist.

So what do I do? I can barely type (although I've never been all that great at that) and clasping a PSP or any other type of controller leads to the kind of pain usually reserved for women in labour (I'm guessing). Not only have I been stripped of my main source of income, but attempting to wind down and have a little fun with my handheld of an evening is nigh on impossible. Christ! At this rate I might have to start doing things like talking to people like – God forbid – my girlfriend. Aaagh! If I don't do something about this soon I'm going to go completely stark staring bonkers. It's like being trapped in a hamster cage without even a wheel to run around in. What the hell am I going to do? Answers on a postcard please. If I haven't topped myself with boredom, I'll let you know what happens. ■

"I'll refer you to a specialist" grumbles the overworked GP before suggesting I sue someone.

FREE GIFT!

BIKINI BOTTOM

Capcom helps us find love

Well folks, it's getting towards summer, and we should all be thinking about getting our lily-white asses down to the beach and browning ourselves. Let's face it, we'll never find true love without a little natural colour will we? Well, if Capcom has its way, no, as with the release of its latest love sim, *Finder Love*, it's giving away a bikini. Purchasing the limited edition *Finder Love* not only nets you the attention of the orient's hottest talent, but an actual piece of beachwear, giving frustrated Japanese teens the option of staying locked in their room all summer virtual dating and sniffing said garment. Featuring three scantily clad sexpots, namely Hara Fumina, Hoshino Aki and Risa Kudo, *Finder Love* allows you to chat up and photograph the girls, then trade the snaps with friends. As far as the bikinis go, they're modelled on the actual swimwear used by the girls in the game and, according to Capcom, aren't designed to be worn. That as may be, but you can sure as hell bet the **Go>Play** team will give it a bash if it makes its way to European shores. ■

I pray for a bikini, a PSP game and to find love ... what, I can have all three?

LEAGUES AHEAD

Warner Bros announces vocal talent for Justice League Heroes

Snowblind studio's latest action/adventure title, *Justice League Heroes*, is set to include a mass of Hollywood talent in the cast list. Recently announced by Warner, the line-up includes Ron Perlman as the caped crusader Batman, Michael Jai White (of *Spawn* fame) as Green Lantern, Crispin '*Viewtiful Joe*' Freeman, Courtenay Taylor (*God Of War*) as Wonder Woman, Chris Edgerly (*Chicken Little*) as the Flash and Daniel Riordan from *Star Trek Enterprise* as Martian Manhunter. But that's just the good guys. Taking on the roles of the darker half are Peter Jessop (*Spawn: The Animation*) as Brainiac and Carlos Alazraqui (*Duck Dodgers*) as The Key. Constructed around the DC superheroes' final stand to save the earth, *Justice League Heroes* looks to be an exciting prospect for the PSP with its meaty RPG elements and wide range of characters. We'll have more on *Justice League* in just a few months. ■

iPSP

Podcasting on your PSP

In this high intensity lifestyle of ours there's nothing more important than information. If you've got enough info you can rule the world, and ruling the world is what we're all about. We're often halted by apathy, or the burning desire to play the latest title to hit our desks, but one day we'll do it. Honest. Thankfully, aiding the dissemination of information around the world, those lovely chaps at The Podcast Network - the world's first commercial podcasting network - have started a dedicated PSP-casting service entitled The PSP Show. The Podcast Network has been distributing news, shows and information since February 2005 and has a selection of over 50 easily downloadable shows covering a range of subjects including gaming, travel, fitness, golf and jazz. Nice. Given the PSP's versatility, getting all the latest news couldn't be easier. Just check out **psp.thepodcastnetwork.com** to get details of how to sign up to the show and get all the latest news on your PSP. Look out world, we're taking you over. ■

FIVE ST★R

Each month, someone picks their five fave PSP games

Tim Empey
Staff Writer (Play)

WIPEOUT PURE
All the speed, excitement and adrenaline you could want in a racer. Great when you're drunk.

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA MAX
I've always loved *Street Fighter*. Now I can play on the bus, or in a doorway.

KATAMARI
Rollin' rollin' rollin'. I love rolling, especially when it involves a great big ciggie, mmm... cancer sticks.

LOCOROCO
We've been playing this for weeks in the office and we're addicted. I know all about addictions.

LUMINES
Still one of the best games on the PSP, enhanced only by the addition of a psychotropic drug or two.

TAKERU AMAZAWA'S TOKYO TITTLE TATTLE

CONTROL ISSUES

An insight into the world of Japanese PSP-ing by our man in Tokyo – Takeru Amazawa

It seems that the Japanese pretty much hate the idea of *Tekken: Dark Resurrection* for PSP, and not just because it's got a dumb name.

If you go to **Amazon.co.jp**'s listing for the game, you'll find dozens of scathing one-star reviews of the game. They've been there since two months before the game's release date. At the time of writing this, the game still hasn't been released. Actually, it's being released in America and Europe first.

Amazon.co.jp, by the way, is a wonderful place to field opinions from non-crazy Japanese gamers. You have to actually log in and be a registered customer to write anything there.

Tekken is – in Japan – a game for a certain small faction of the hardcore. It is a game for people who are so bold and nuts that they import American PlayStation2s so they can play *GTA: San Andreas*. In a way, it's kind of funny that *Tekken* is regarded as a game for Americans, because it's made by the Japanese.

The reason people are so upset about the game? Well, in Japan, we have places called arcades, where people can go and play hot fighting games against real opponents. Since the cabinets are situated back-to-back, you don't even have to see your opponent's face! *Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection* was released in arcades mere minutes after *Tekken 5* was released on PlayStation2, which, if I recall correctly, was only a few minutes after *Tekken 5* was released in the arcade. Though *Tekken 6* looms on the horizon for PlayStation3 (no Japanese arcade release has been announced yet), fans of the series are, currently, adopting a take-what-you-can-get stance. And they want to take *Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection* home, only doing so requires them to get it for PSP. They don't want to do this because, according to one Amazon reviewer, "No one in their right mind who plays *Tekken* plays it without a joystick!" This is true, mostly – only perhaps "in their right mind" should be replaced with "in Japan."

So what's good about *Dark Resurrection?* It's a full fighting game. It's not some lame "for portable systems" adaptation with shorter characters with big heads. It's not like *Vampire Savior* or *Street Fighter Alpha 3*, where the game is available for a dozen other systems before being put on PSP. It's a half-sequel, and the PSP is the only console it's appearing on. It even has full-motion video. It has everything a console *Tekken* has. It even has the arcade game's competitive online mode, available through the PSP's WLAN – if you own a wireless router. And... if you play the game at home. You know, home. Where your joysticks are.

[It's kind of funny that Tekken is regarded as a game for Americans]

Studies have shown – as I reported a few months ago – that some 3/4s of Japanese PSP players use the machine to play games only while at home. Outside, they use it to watch self-encoded videos or listen to music. When Japanese *Tekken* players are at home, they're playing *Tekken 5* on PlayStation2. When they're out of the house, they often find themselves itching to play *Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection* in the arcade. So they find an arcade, and do so. Now, though, they will have it on the PSP. With no joystick.

Namco is including a special "controller adaptor" in the package – a flat, adhesive disk to affix to the directional buttons to offer better diagonal control. Or players can play with the analog stick, if they want to – an idea to which an Amazon poster says, roughly, "Analog-stick yourself, Nameko."

"Nameko" is a twist on "Namuko," which is how you write "Namco" in Japanese katakana. "Nameru" means, literally, "to lick," though colloquially it means, roughly, "to mess around with someone you really shouldn't be messing around with." And now, perhaps, I've gone and said too much.

In closing, *Tekken 5: Dark Resurrection* arcade cabinets are the tried-and-truest places in Tokyo to find opened cans of Dr Pepper. Just something I've observed. ■

FIRST LOOK

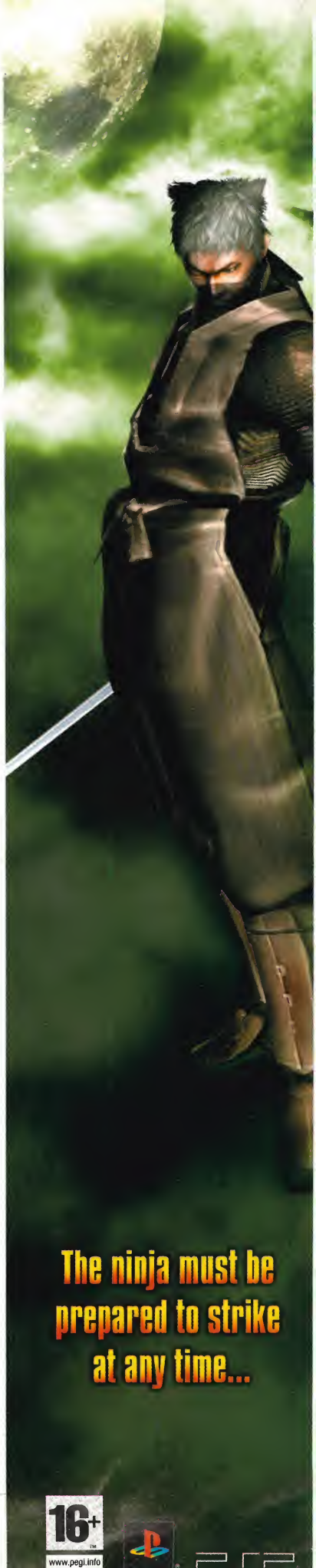
LUCASARTS DOUBLE WHAMMY

It's party time in Traxion and Thrillville

LucasArts, so far relatively uninvolved with the PSP, has announced a brace of innovative titles for your sexy handheld. The first, and rather strange concept for the PSP is a theme park creator called *Thrillville*. Combining strategy, resource management and old-school party game action, it's not simply about building your park. Once you've completed an attraction, it's yours to use and abuse as you see fit. As long as you keep the customers happy with the huge array of rides and attractions at your disposal and keep the money rolling in by completing over 100 missions, you'll achieve your aim of staving off the monopoly-hungry Globo-Joy corporation. Complete with a rollercoaster cam, a social interaction system allowing you to get to know your customers and over 20 classic playable Midway games included in your inventory, we're sitting on the fence with this one, as it sounds a little too much like *Rollercoaster Tycoon* for our liking.

The other, slightly more bizarre title announced by LucasArts this month is a quirky little number called *Traxion*. This collection of mini-games changes depending on the type of music you've got loaded into your PSP and has over 20 such games, including *Vortex*, a ball bouncing game, *Beatdrop*, a block puzzler and *Karate-oke*, a musical fighter. In addition to being a collection of musical mini-games, *Traxion* also serves as an organiser for all your tunes, categorising them by band, album or genre. Needless to say we'll give you regular updates on it as we get fed the latest from LucasArts, so watch this rather eccentric space.

TRAXION



GAMES ANNOUNCED!

KONAMI LINE-UP

Konami splurge on 16 new titles

Konami really has pushed the boat out with this year's announcement. As well as the titles we covered last issue, such as *Bomberman*, *Coded Arms Contagion* and *Metal Gear*, they've announced a slew of other titles to keep us busy over the coming months. Good old Konami.

The first, and most exciting for anyone who's a fan of retro gaming, is *Gradius Collection*, the definitive assemblage of one of the world's most popular shoot-'em-up series. Included in the package are *Gradius' I* to *IV* and *Gradius Gaiden*, making June an exciting month for *Gradius* lovers. *Steel Horizon* is a brand new combination of real-time and turn-based strategy, set aboard a secret navy flagship vessel during World War II. Controlling your entire fleet over 20-odd missions, and battling not only the Axis, but also a secret shadow organisation, we're looking for *Steel Horizons* to float our boat.

Slightly less action-packed, *Online Chess Kingdoms* allows you to get neck deep in the world of chess. The game is based around the ability to choose one of five factions and battle it out in a persistent online world for control of the universe. Bound to appeal to all the nerds out there, *Online Chess Kingdoms'* release this autumn will no doubt move many fans of the world's most popular game. *Winx Club: Join The Club* throws you into an all-new adventure with those fabulous fairies as they set out to stop the evil machinations of the malevolent Lord Darkar. The Winx Club must collect several pieces of a powerful emblem before the evil warlord completes his plan. With mini-game elements and a side-scrolling shooter aspect, we're unsure what to make of this.

Finally, and based on the smash cartoon series *Xiaolin Showdown*, the portable version is one that's scheduled for nearer Christmas. Taking control of six characters such as Omi, Kimiko and Clay, you're charged with the task of travelling the world in search of mystical objects of power to keep them away from the bad guys. Cue loads of kung-fu high-jinks and bright colours. We'll see how all these titles are shaping up next year, but for now, we're just pleased Konami is so committed to the console. ■

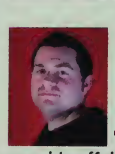
Firmware fudge

Neuros releases fix for MPEG4 recorder

IN RESPONSE TO the problems arising from the new 2.7 firmware update from Sony, Neuros Technology LLC has released an update for its MPEG4 Recorder 2, available free on its website (**www.neurostechnology.com**). Not only does the update deal with the incompatibility issues, but also adds a few extra functions, like a couple of recording options and better sound quality for the PSP. Whilst the Neuros press release didn't blame Sony for the mix up, it did snipe at the company, citing them as having reduced their list of supported devices and suggesting that consumers don't want to be limited to proprietary UMD discs. ■

THE HOURS

WHAT'S BEEN EATING OUR LIVES, AND FOR HOW LONG



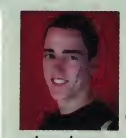
SIMON

JUICED: ELIMINATOR

"It's okay for a pimp-yer-ride affair, but I get pissed off when my neon gets busted, 'cos that means I lose respect." 16 hrs

HURLING ABUSE AT POWERSTATION

"One's a bloody northerner, the other's a vegan. What's worse is that she's a ginger, tofu and Marmite-guzzling, tree-hugging vegan." 02 wks



ANDY

ME AND MY KATAMARI

"Great ball-rolling adventure, spoilt slightly by the most selfish characters ever seen in gaming. All you do is give and they just keep on taking." 10 hrs

KAYAKING

"Ahh, the thrill of the white water is amazing. Battling the force of nature is the only challenge left to man. I could totally have Mother Nature at Kayaking." 16 hrs

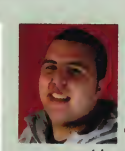
TOM

DEF JAM

"Don't mess with the champ, chump. I've been taking all comers on this, the most gruesome grappler ever. Kicking Sean Paul in the nuts is better than sex." 24 hrs

WATCHING EUROVISION

"How Daz didn't win I'll never know. Those schoolgirls were pro dancers dressed as schoolgirls though. Cheats!" 04 hrs



RYAN

GUILTY GEAR JUDGMENT

"Somehow they've managed to get the controls right on this 2D beat-'em-up. Quite exactly how, I'm not sure, but hey I don't really care. Awesome!" 34 hrs

WHORING MYSELF OUT TO XBOX LIVE

"It's a hard life, being a score whore, it means you have to play horrible games like *X-Men* just for the achievements." 04 wks

RUMOUR MILL

YOU JACKASS!

Jackass title rumoured to hit PSP

MTV's pain-hungry adrenaline junkies from the ridiculous world of *Jackass* are set to hit a couple of consoles around Christmas. While it's not guaranteed to be the PSP that it'll come crashing onto, the latest press release states that the game will be available on a home console as well as a portable, so we can only assume the two consoles that developer Sidhe has in mind are PS2 and PSP. Also, given the developer's previous endeavour, namely *GripShift*, the likelihood of the *Jackass* crew making an appearance on Sony's brace of consoles seems quite high.

Managing Director Mario Wynands (not the infuriatingly crap R&B goon, by the way) anticipates great things for the franchise, and indicated the age rating on *Jackass* – which he said would "create a game that's true to the licence" – would be pretty high. Supporting that is the promise that players will be able to save replays of their irresponsible antics and replay them from different angles and trade them with mates in the director's mode. Done properly, this could be an absolute goldmine for whichever publisher picks this one up, leading to a gout of follow-ups, copycat titles and merchandising à la *Tony Hawk's*, but anything short of a supreme effort could well see another wasted licence. Here's hoping. ■

NEW FOR PSP

COMIC BOOK GUYS

Digital comics now freely available on PSP

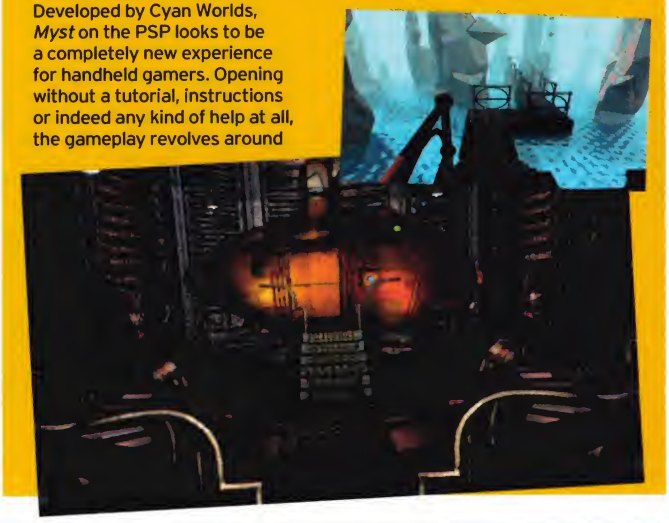
Comic book fans rejoice. Your PSP is now a fully functioning futuristic comic book, just like those ones in *Minority Report*. Unlike the upcoming *Metal Gear Solid Digital Comic*, this new breed of comics doesn't need UMDs, but can be subscribed to and viewed using the new flash functionality from the latest firmware update. If you've not seen a digital comic running on a PSP before, you should get yourself down to one of the leading proponents of the digital comic revolution, **www.arcomics.com** and check out a few of its samples. One of the most popular digital comics on the site is the recently released *The Fronteers* – a flash comic written to appeal to tastes by a feedback system allowing you to rate storylines and suggest others. We suspect that with the wealth of similar sites ready to pop up, the digital comic will soon become an important part of the PSP's media arsenal. ■

JUST IN

Mysty eyed

Midway snaffle rights to Myst

IT'S BEEN OVER a decade since *Myst* hit our shelves and whilst it's very much a love-it-or-hate-it kind of title, there's few that can dispute its uniqueness in the gaming world. Courtesy of Midway Games, the franchise is being reinvigorated on the PSP, something sure to broaden the appeal of handheld gaming. Developed by Cyan Worlds, *Myst* on the PSP looks to be a completely new experience for handheld gamers. Opening without a tutorial, instructions or indeed any kind of help at all, the gameplay revolves around exploration and puzzling as the tantalising narrative unfolds. We can all look forward to some lavish environments, clever brainteasers and a truly inimitable experience when *Myst* hits our shelves. Details of a release date are sketchy at the minute, so at the moment all we can say is that it's definitely a title not to be *Myst*. ■



...kill in any place...

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NEWSFLASH

Sans of time

Keep running out of space for movies, music, game saves and podcasts? Well if you're anything like us you'll probably be overjoyed at the prospect of a SanDisk 4GB Memory Stick for your PSP, giving you up to 64 hours of music, 20 hours of movies and over 4,000 photos. You'll probably not be quite so overjoyed at the price however, as it's set to retail Stateside at $220.

Bring it back

Despite our backgrounds changing colour every month, we still get bored of the same ol' same ol'. Luckily though, we've found a great new download on **qj.net** that has already spiced up our lives beyond belief. Why not try it yourself and make your own with Ultimax's new background creator at **http://forums.qj.net/showthreads.php?t=50846**

Spot check

The upcoming PlayStation Spot system – set to launch later this year across Europe – has received something of a slating from the PSP owning community. Apparently, the downloaded content can not be saved onto your Memory Stick and is lost as soon as the console is switched off or reset. We haven't had official confirmation of this from Sony as yet, but if true it could make the PlayStation Spot somewhat redundant.

Lap of luxury

SCEJ has announced a new range of high class PlayStation branded items, but they're only going to be available from the PlayStation Square store in Tokyo. Items include wine glasses, pens as well as a leather PSP case designed by Emilio Pucci. Have a gander at **http://www.watch.impress.co.jp/game/docs/20060529/pssig.htm.**

YOU LEGEND!

Empire goes retro

We've had *Midway Arcade Classics* and *Capcom Classics Collection*, so now it's the turn of Taito to whip out its aged titles and brandish them under the banner of retro for all to see. Being retro fetishists we couldn't resist a peek, and what's on show here is something of an eyeful and no mistake. Despite being a little wrinkled, and more than a tad saggy, the gems on offer with Taito's latest mound of retro look to be, in the truest sense of the word, *Legends*.

Included in the line-up here are such timeless titles as *Space Invaders*, *Phoenix*, and *Qix*, making it a real treat for the veteran gamers out there. Other, perhaps not quite so ancient titles thrown into the mix have equal status in the golden age of gaming, and with titles like *The New Zealand Story* and four completely re-imagined classics to keep you entertained, we're sure there'll be a little retro something for everyone in this little package. Not the first retro compilation to attempt to spruce up some of the dustier titles, we're interested to see how the four re-jigged titles – namely *Balloon Bomber*, *Cameltry*, *Legend Of Kage* and *Crazy Balloon* go alongside the unadulterated games and whether new graphics, items and bonus features do enough for the retro formula to up the quality of the package.

Hot coffee

Wireless hotspots the wrong kind of hot

Where do you go if you want to surf the net for grot, find a source of anthrax or get details of how to build a bomb? There are many places, but you wouldn't expect your local fast food joint, café or pub to be amongst them (unless your local happens to be an Al-Qaeda-run brothel, of course). Recent research has shown however, that a majority of public Wi-Fi hotspots allowed pretty much unrestricted access to the seedier side of the web.

James Walker, mobility specialist at Internet security and network solutions provider Tendilus said: "To say we were gobsmacked is an understatement," commenting on the sheer weight of dodgy content the investigative team got their hands on, and with searches like "Anthrax Source" being completely unobstructed, we can understand why. Of the sites tested, 80 per cent gave access to porn sites, all locations let mobile users search for "massage parlour London" and "escorts London", adult images were available to download across a wide range of ISPs and every hotspot tested gave ways to make bombs and places to buy Viagra.

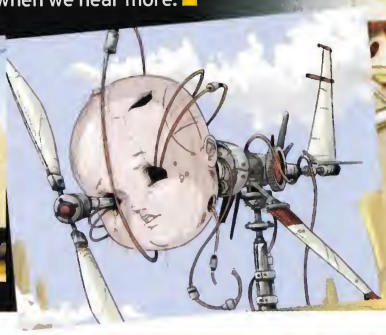
Again, baffled at the almost unlimited access offered by retail outlets, Walker suggested that, "Retailers need to review their use of public hotspots immediately in the wake of these findings". We're not entirely in agreement, as freedom on the move is a valuable thing, but with public restriction at an all-time high, it's only a matter of time before the *Daily Mail* gets its teeth into this one.

DIRTY BIKERS

RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

New Road Rash rehash motoring onto PSP

Road Rash clones are ten a penny on other formats, but thus far we've not seen a decent racing combat title on the PSP since *WipEout Pure*. Developer Akella looks to change all that with its latest announcement, *Rage Rider* - a futuristic bike smash-'em-up involving loads of high octane thrills and carbon monoxide spills. Taking control of the world's hardest biker, Axle, it's your job to hunt down and apprehend a string of nefarious Hells Angels-types as well as corrupt sheriffs, religious cults and all manner of other scumbaggery. Making this take on the *Road Rash* formula slightly different is an RPG system allowing you to level up your character and furnish them with a huge array of firearms and melee weapons. It's not all about the riding though, as *Rage Rider* comprises several different elements to keep the player happy. There's action, shooting, stealth, adventure and puzzling as well. We're looking forward to the old-school bike bashing sections though, as we've been promised a whole world of punishment to deal out in the form of shotguns, grenade launchers, and the trusty old lead pipe. Whilst there's no release date, or indeed publisher as yet, we're pretty sure it'll make it to release. We'll be all over it like a nasty rash when we hear more. ■



Get Lost!

Ubisoft picks up a bunch of castaways

ARE YOU THE kind of telly addict that sits screaming at folk on the goggle box? If so, you're probably the kind of person who likes watching *Lost* just to shout advice at the screen. Now, thanks to Ubisoft you'll be able to help out your favourite characters with the aid of a joypad.

That's right, in one of the least surprising announcements of the year, the hit TV show will be making the crossover to gaming some time next year. What form the game will take is unknown at the moment, but we reckon it could work really well as a *Broken Sword*-style adventure. Of course, it will probably end up being an action/adventure game with stealth elements, but you never know, we might be surprised.

Without any concrete information we'll just have to speculate, but it's almost a guarantee that you will be able to control more than one character. Jack, Kate, Sawyer and John Locke are almost a dead cert to be playable and obviously all the characters will no doubt show their faces at various points in the game.

Whether the plot will start at the beginning of the series or give us a new storyline is unclear, but as the game will probably coincide with season three it may well tie into that somehow. We're hoping for a polar bear fighting mini-game. More info as we get it though, if it doesn't get lost on the way of course. ■

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...and disappear without a trace.

Tenchu – Time of the Assassins brings all the deadly combat and tension of walking the ninja path to the PSP.

- 5 playable characters including the evil Onikage
- Classic multiplayer mode returns – with wireless
- The mission editor is back – defy destiny and create your own paths

TENCHU TIME OF THE ASSASSINS

Out June 23rd.

PSP SEGA

FROM SOFTWARE www.sega.co.uk

NEWSFLASH

Rant-a-thon

There will always be fanboys on both sides of the fence, but this year's award for complete fanboy dickishness goes to a young chap called Jon who has posted up over 12 minutes of fanboy ranting about how great the PSP is. Check it out at **video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-6405445518216376043**. Some of you will laugh and some will feel depressed, but everyone should see just how damaging fanboyism can get.

Sudoku off!

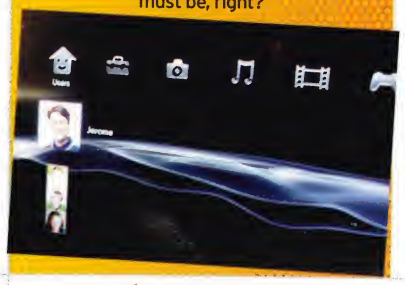
Inventor of modern Sudoku, Wayne Gould, faced off against Aki Hoshino in a Sony press event for the upcoming *Kazuo* game, and whilst the sexy siren lost the first round convincingly, having begged her way into a rematch, she managed to trounce the beardy brainiac the second time round.

Version 2.71 already?

Just before going to press we received word that Sony is laying on yet another firmware update. Version 2.71 isn't nearly as groundbreaking as other revisions however, as it merely fixes a couple of bugs present in the LocationFree Player and allows you to download demos directly from the PSP's browser.

Not in the interface

Behind all the swanky new showings of the PS3's upcoming titles, some of us got a sneaky peek at the interface, which closely resembles the PSP's, only in gigantically high res. We're not sure exactly why this is news, but hey, it's in the news section, so therefore it must be, right?



ADD-ON!

D'YA WANT CHIPS WITH THAT?

First PSP mod chip coming

All this talk about holding back from updating your PSP so you can stay on the homebrew scene could be rendered moot soon, as the world's first mod chip for the PSP is headed your way. The Undiluted Platinum (or U.P.) allows for all manner of modification, including the creation of custom firmware builds, something of major importance to many PSP owners out there. Yup, this could finally herald the PSP's coming of age as the best handheld ever if (as we're reliably informed it does) it works as it should. Imagine the possibilities of homebrew applications available to everyone. It can even be used to reawaken PSPs that have suffered the indignity of being bricked by dodgy downloads and applications.

One of the U.P.'s main attractions is its ease of use and flexibility. Unlike mod chips for other consoles, the U.P. already has a sizeable support base including software and installation downloads, high resistance to bumps, shakes and falls, and an emphasis on ease of installation. There's even a diagnostic application to determine the cause of any failed installations. It's worth noting however, it'll still require the disassembling of your PSP, a fair bit of soldering and some nervous fiddling to put the thing back together again. A probable retail price will be something like $90-$100, so get saving for what could well be the best PSP add-on you'll ever buy.

Copies have gone out to the hacking scene's best and brightest to give them a headstart on developing the technology, so there's undoubtedly greater things to come from this breakthrough in PSP modding. ■

LOSING CONNECTION

Sony ditching Connect revamp

Sony's planned assault on download giant iTunes looks to have suffered something of a setback recently. This is according to reports that the long-awaited overhaul of its Connect service has been cancelled. The reason behind this – and indeed any real confirmation – is still pretty sketchy at the moment, but with Sony Corporation of America's CTO Phil Wiser – famously one of Connect's greatest supporters – leaving the company, the future of the entire service now seems to be in some jeopardy.

With iTunes having captured such a big portion of the downloadable market, Sony's service was always going to struggle despite the more sizeable retail network. To see the kind of things you can download with the site, check out **www.connect-europe.com**. However, without the renovation, there's even less chance of Sony toppling Apple in the battle for legitimate downloads. ■

CONNECT

UK CHARTS

We've been keeping an eye on...

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	FIFA World Cup Germany 2006	EA	We're football crazy at the minute. Look we've even started foaming at the mouth.
02	Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	Another footy title? What's this doing here? Who'd have thunk it?
03	Monster Hunter Freedom	Capcom	Hoorah. Killing things is great fun, especially when you get to eat it and wear its skin afterwards.
04	Daxter	SCEE	The little orange ottsel crawls his way to number four in the charts.
05	GTA: Liberty City Stories	Take 2	Enough already. We're bored of having to write something about this every month.
06	Football Manager 2006	SEGA	By far the better of the two footy manager options on the PSP, trust us son.
07	SOCOM: US Navy SEALs Fireteam Bravo	SCEE	Tom's still bitching about Simon's dirty camping tactics at this.
08	Lemmings	SCEE	Like worms, this iteration goes back to its roots and does what it does best: kill lemmings.
09	Worms: Open Warfare	THQ	Wiggly worms with whopping weapons. Try saying that several times in a row.
10	Pursuit Force	SCEE	Leaping from motor to motor in a single bound, Johnny Hardcop takes on the bad boys.
11	FIFA Street 2	EA	Brah, brah! Deez skilz is mad, go play wiv yer dad.
12	Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell: Essentials	Ubisoft	Dark, uninviting and slightly crap, *Splinter Cell: Essentials* stays in the shadows.
13	OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	SEGA	Yeah! Whoo-hooo! Where are you going to take me? Up the charts hopefully.
14	Midway Arcade Treasures: Extended Play	Midway	Three flavours of *Mortal Kombat* and much more in one sweet retro package.
15	Formula 1 Grand Prix	SCEE	Yawn. Formula 1 goes a little stale down here at the foot of the charts.
16	Metal Gear Acid 2	Konami	The sexiest card game since Sam Fox's *Strip Poker* on the ZX Spectrum.
17	From Russia With Love	EA	Dire rubbish with few redeeming features. Steer well clear.
18	The Sims 2	EA	You might be surprised at how well the Sims do in the palm of your hand.
19	Championship Manager 2006	EIDOS	The runt of the footy management litter, you're probably better off with the other one.
20	Everybody's Golf	SCEE	Golf for everybody except those who prefer Tiger Woods.

FIFA World Cup Germany 2006

We've been playing this for yonks for our Wi-Fi World Cup feature, and frankly, we're sick of it. Well, we're sick of Simon's incessant trash-talking anyway.

Monster Hunter Freedom

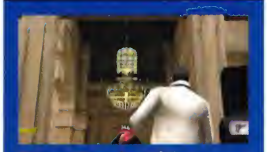
Kill, kill, kill. If only we could do this kind of thing in real life. We'd be off on the big game hunt every weekend, cutting down elephants in their prime and fashioning their ears into wings.

Worms: Open Warfare

Time for another itchy ring gag... well, to be honest we're getting too old for that sort of thing. We'll just say that *Worms: Open Warfare* is as good as ever. In other words, great.

FIFA Street 2

FIFA Street 2 is actually a pretty enjoyable game. The world's best footballers being dazzled into falling over every five minutes by a stepover is comical, but as a whole, fun enough.



From Russia With Love

We didn't like this heavily shorn version of the PS2 iteration. We suspect that other mags didn't play it for as long as us, which means that it got much better scores than it should have.

The Sims 2

An accurate translation to the handheld means *The Sims 2* is every bit as good as you want it to be. All the narcolepsy, self-defecation and dodgy sexual antics you could want.

WORLDWIDE CHARTS

Don't say we never do anything for you. Look, we've been to the States and Japan investigating what they're buying...

USA CHARTS

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	SCEA	One of the most complete games on the console. Pure genius.
02	Field Commander	SCEA	A very tasty turn-based strategy that we're hoping will hit our shores soon.
03	Me & My Katamari	Namco	If you like rolls, you'll love this. Even if you don't like rolls you'll probably like it.
04	Daxter	SCEA	The little orange one has been doing well Stateside. Good on him.
05	Virtua Tennis World Tour	SEGA	Still one of the best games for the console, *Virtua Tennis* is smashing.
06	Ys: The Ark Of Napishtim	Konami	One for the enthusiasts this, Ys is about as strange as the name suggests.
07	Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	Lara and her bouncy buddies return in the most capable sequel to date.
08	Monster Hunter Freedom	Capcom	Despite being quite an involved title, *MHF* works surprisingly well on the PSP.
09	Final Fantasy VII: Crisis Core	Square Enix	Another in the selection of *FF VII* sequels, prequels and spin-offs. Quite good though.
10	Valkyrie Profile: Lenneth	Square Enix	The yanks seem to be enjoying this RPG remake. One of the best apparently.

JAPANESE CHARTS

POS	TITLE	PUBLISHER	IN THREE SECONDS
01	Naruto: Narutimate Portable ~ Mugenjo no Maki	Bandi	Crazy Japanese wackiness. We've got no idea what it's about though.
02	Initial D Street Stage	SEGA	Top arcade racing action. Might not get over to these shores. Sad.
03	DJ Max Portable	Pentavision	Makin' music on da move, on the number 51 I'm bustin' ma groove.
04	Talkman	SCEI	Who needs English teachers when you've got giant blue birds to squawk at you.
05	Talkman	Euro SCEI	Same as above, only with loads of European languages. Fun for a bit.
06	Bleach Heat The Soul 2	SCEI	Big brassy knuckle trading game from Bandai, those responsible for DBZ.
07	Gradius Portable	Konami	We doubt if you could ever get any more Gradius into a handheld. Ever.
08	Taiko No Tatsujin Portable	Namco	We don't get it. A drum simulator on the PSP? How the hell does that work?
09	LocoRoco	SCEI	Best. Game. Ever. Fact.
10	Super Robot Taisen MX Portable	Bandai	Simple port of *SRT: MX* on PS2. We're not sure that'll help you though.

grand theft auto Vice City Stories™

RUMOUR MILL

Go>Play examines which rumours could be credible and which are probably total bull. Rockstar is as tight-lipped as ever, so we rate how likely each one actually is...

Rumour 1

Vice City Stories will continue the story that played out in the original Vice City

While this is quite possible, *Vice City* did end with Tommy Vercetti killing off all his enemies and taking over. Obviously it would be easy for new enemies to come along and cause problems for Tommy, but most *GTA* plots put you in the shoes of a character at the bottom of the criminal ladder.

Chances: 65%

Rumour 2

Vice City Stories will allow you to fly helicopters and planes

Vice City on the PS2 was the first *GTA* game to introduce flight into the series, so the groundwork for it is there. It's just a question of whether the PSP can render the entire city well enough as you soar above it in your chosen aircraft. We think Rockstar has had plenty of time to figure out how to make it work, so this is definitely a possibility.

Chances: 78%

Rumour 3

You will play the part of a cop in Vice City Stories

Seeing as this is a route already taken by *The Getaway*, *True Crime* and *Driver*, we sincerely doubt this is the case. Couple that with the fact that the game is called *Grand THEFT Auto* and it looks even less likely. If the character is a dirty cop then perhaps that would be more credible, but seeing as dirty cops were villains in *San Andreas*, the chances are still slim.

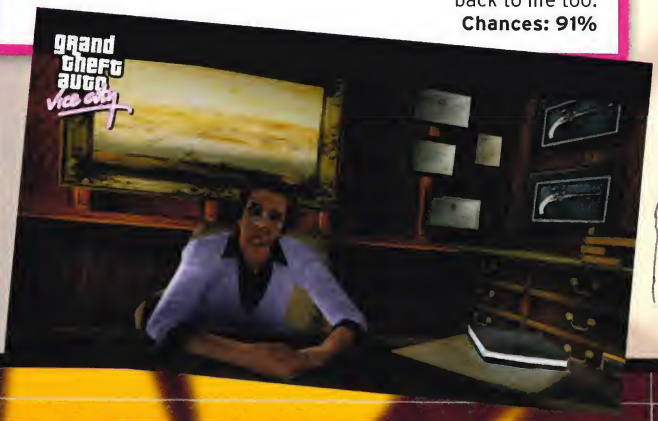
Chances: 13%

Rumour 4

Characters from the first Vice City will make an appearance in Vice City Stories

This is almost a guarantee. If you look at *Liberty City Stories*, that was peppered with familiar faces as well as a few new ones. Hopefully Candy Suxxx will show her face and assets along with shady lawyer Ken Rosenberg. Depending on when the game is set there will be scope to bring dead characters back to life too.

Chances: 91%



STAR LETTER

STAR LETTER
Joytech Media Amp for every star letter

Firmware frustrations

I see from Fanjita's website that Sony has managed, in release 2.7, to close all loopholes in the software that allow us to use homebrew and the *GTA* cheat. Fanjita's advice is not to upgrade if you want to keep your existing functionality.

Sony has already caught me with this once. I have an early PSP, which I keep below version 2 to run homebrews and ISOs and a later model I had to buy to run all the current games, as some of the emulators did not work with Fanjita's eLoader. Now it appears that the functionality of *GTA* is going to be compromised, and if I buy any new games they will not run without upgrading to version 2.7

This gives me three options: 1) Upgrade my PSP and lose the *GTA* cheat facility and the ability to run some homebrew programs. 2) Buy a third PSP to play new games. 3) Never buy another PSP game again.

This is made worse by the fact that nowhere on the game boxes or advertising does it show what version is required. At least on PC Games, the full hardware and software specifications are listed so that you know if a game runs on your equipment.

This seems to be rather counterproductive from Sony's point of view, as all equipment seems to be integrating these days and Sony claims they are aiming for the PSP to be useful for everything but is preventing anyone from writing applications for the PSP. The ironic thing of course is that Microsoft is being taken to court all over the world for strangling the market and yet its architecture is far more open than Sony's, is openly published and there is a wealth of software by anyone who can write software, a lot of it free.

Perhaps we should be considering taking Sony to court to get the company to make its architecture freely available. In the meantime, how about a campaign to persuade software companies to make their software run on the lowest level of Sony's operating system that it requires to run and then publish it on the outside of the games box and advertising.

You could also help by publishing the version level each game needs to upgrade to in your reviews on the games. This would prevent us from wasting money on games we cannot use.
Ian Burford, The Wirral

A very good point Ian, but what you have to remember is that the PSP is Sony's property at the end of the day. They can do pretty much anything they want with the system, and it seems that they have a real problem with homebrew and benevolent hackers like Fanjita. Given the popularity of the scene it's difficult to fathom why, as there will be a fair few gamers out there who are as miffed as you at the prospect of buying another PSP just because of some deluded desire to rid the world of what they see as piracy. That said, much like life itself, hackers will find a way, and the world's first PSP mod chip is on the verge of release, meaning that all that business of having to purchase five different PSPs to perform different functions will become a thing of the past. Just hold out and wait for the Undiluted Platinum chip if you're interested in sorting out your functionality woes. As far as Firmware compatibility goes, that's very difficult to put into reviews, as the firmware required could change as different production runs are put out. There are people on the net compiling lists, but as yet, none that we've found seem to be very comprehensive. Forums are good places for that sort of thing, why not jump on ours at www.goplaymagazine.co.uk.

Up until now I have not been too bothered about new releases - *GTA* is not really my thing! However, I would really like to get my hands on *Worms* and *Football Manager Handheld*. My question is - can I play either of these games on 1.5 or all new releases now 2.0 or higher as *GTA* is widely advertised as being? If this is the case, I think I will finally have to bite the bullet and upgrade!
Carl, Forum

Difficult one that. You're not going to be able to effectively run homebrew if you upgrade. There are ways, but it's impossible to play current games and emulations on the same machine unless you're looking to get hold of the new Undiluted Platinum Mod Chip, which could, if incorrectly installed, cause damage to your PSP. Maybe one day Fanjita will find a loophole, but for now if you want to run homebrew, keep your firmware updates as low as possible. In the meantime, what about looking for a *Worms* and *Footy Manager* emulator? We'll have a look and post a reply if we find anything. One other thing worth remembering is that a version 1.5 PSP is a good deal more valuable than one with 2.7, so if you plan to leave the retro scene, it might be worth selling it, which will net you far more cash and mean that there's one more 1.5 PSP out there. >>

HOT TOPIC

What's on everyone's brains this month?

How will the Undiluted Platinum mod chip affect you and your PSP? Are you thinking of getting one? Would you risk the installation yourself, or are you happy with a 2.7 PSP?

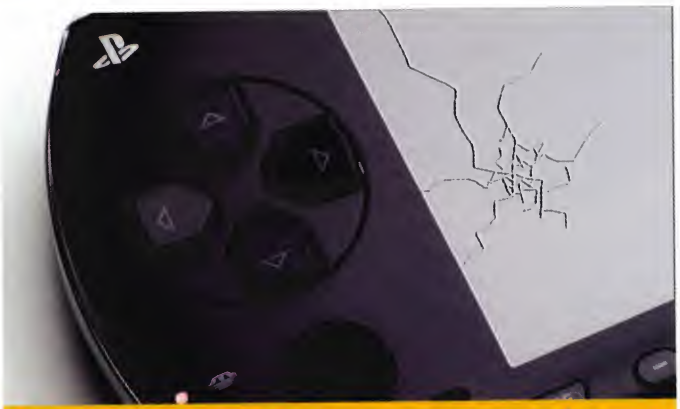
I'm perfectly happy with my current PSP. Sure there are loads of things you can do with this mod chip, but I certainly wouldn't want to run the risk of taking my PSP apart and putting it back together again only to discover that I'd screwed the whole thing up.
Tom, Bristol

I'm sure you'll be able to buy PSPs with ready installed mod chips in a year or so, probably even less, so I might wait for one of those then get well into the homebrew scene with it.
Henry, Dorset

I don't think it's a very good idea to be buggering around with the insides of your handheld, but the benefits are certainly ones I would like. If they created a non-permanent, low risk one, I'd definitely be up for that.
Nick, London

This is a great introduction to the range of PSP extras and add-ons. With this device those people into the homebrew scene (which isn't everyone, by a long way) have the opportunity to stick two fingers up at Sony and do whatever they want with their PSPs. Great.
Tim, N. Ireland

Undoubtedly an extremely beneficial thing for Fanjita and friends, but I doubt if the majority of owners will want their consoles sullied by this chip. I might go for it if it proves to work as well as folk say.
Wes, S. London



If your PSP looks anything like this, you might want to start crying, 'cos Sony doesn't cover that kind of damage. Stop crying man! It's only a PSP!

developed, we've all found our own little niches. Some of us are always messing about with movies and attempting to get the best out of the PSP's screen. Others use theirs to surf the net pretty much wherever they go, but its greatest use amongst us is the Wi-Fi gaming.

Scratch and sniff

Hey ho Go>Play, great mag, keep up the fantastic work. Seeing as how you're so great and all, I was wondering if you might be able to give me a helping hand with a rather tearful issue I have. Last night, as I was cuddling up to my PSP, gently cleaning the screen with my official screen cleaner, I did something horrible. Something so monstrous that I don't think I can live with myself. I put a dirty great big scratch right the way across my lovely PSP screen. A small bit of grit had worked its way into my cleaning cloth you see, and now it looks like I'll never be able to fully enjoy my PSP ever again. I'm jesting of course, as it isn't that bad, but it does take much away from the experience. Your office's PSPs must get pretty well busted up, what do you do when you scratch, crack or gack yours up?
Scratchy McDuff, Scratchtown

The first option would be a whole new faceplate available from eBay or somewhere like www.PSPtree.co.uk. For smaller scratches, products like Displex, which despite being mainly for PDAs, work tremendously well at making your PSP look as good as new with minimal effort. The screen isn't covered by Sony's warrantee, so any damage to the screen and it's up to you to fix it yourself, thus voiding any and all other warrantees on the machinery.

Car Wars

I spent all night making this model car. Thought you might like it for your office. I love my PSP. I've tried other gaming machines, but the PSP is the best by far. Your magazine gives the best info about games, so keep up the good work. Good luck.
Steven Fitzgerald, Inverness

Thank you Steven, it's always nice to receive presents, and given that yours is the first we've had, it's by far the best. For anyone who didn't have the pleasure of getting a golden car in the post, here's a picture of it. Just for you Steven, here's a shot of our dreamboat Dep Ed Simon dishing out some Go>Play guns in thanks.

GO>PLAY

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Turn down that horrible noise, you're making me Def

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK: THE TAKEOVER

OUT: 21 JULY

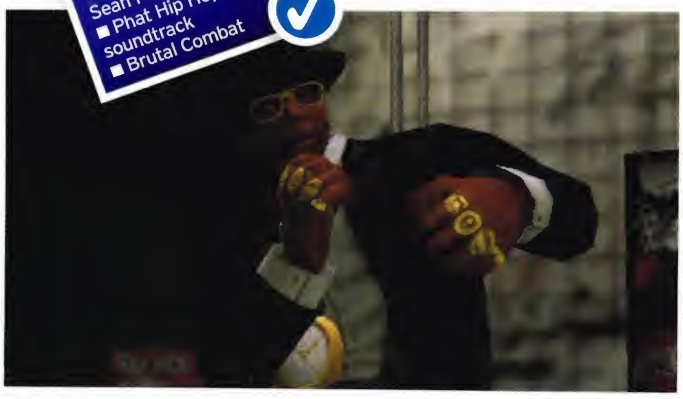
Publisher **EA** / Developer **AKI Corporation** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
All of your fave Hip Hop artists set about flipping each other's wigs back. Ya heard!

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Masses of licensed fighters including Method Man, Xzibit, Snoop Dogg and Sean Paul
- Phat Hip Hop soundtrack
- Brutal Combat

If life in the ghetto was anything like EA and AKI Corporation would have us believe, hangin' out in the hood would be extremely scary indeed. The fear wouldn't come from guns or drugs or even gangs. It'd come from the horrible possibility that you might wind up accidentally trash talking some giant Hip Hop artist who might be forced (as any kind of disrespect in the hood needs to be paid for with blood) to snap one or more of your limbs in retribution. There is an upside however, in that while you're having your seven bails of sugar coated shit pummeled from your soon-to-be corpse, the tunes being pumped from the ghetto blaster would probably include the magnificent LLCool J's Momma Said Knock You Out – one of our very favourite tunes on the ghetto hit parade. No, the first time you perform one of the more gruesome manoeuvres, you'll be giggling uncomfortably at the genuine feeling of pain – and/or death – that *Def Jam* gets across. The ghetto seems like a truly frightening place, even with the phat rhymes. We talking, holmes, 'bout EA's new DJ title, namely *Def Jam Fight For New York: The Takeover* Aight. A scrapper goin' 'bout it wiv those punk ass *Smackdown* pranksters over THQ's side of the hood. Now peep dis homeys.

Apologies for sliding into ghetto-speak there, but it's a common affliction in an industry rammed with urban, ghetto and street culture. For us country folk in fact, the occasional blast of street-flava'd trash talking is an almost daily event, reaffirming just how white us white boys are. Thankfully however, we're relatively fly with it, so we don't often get beaten up on the



Our created character tries acting out the last scene of *Star Wars Episode III* for his weekly Am-Dram meeting

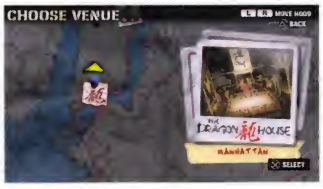
mean streets of Bournemouth. We reckon, despite its ridiculously over-the-top campness and never-ending ghetto jive, *Def Jam Fight For New York: The Takeover* is about as close to gangsta life as we're likely to get, and for that we're rather thankful.

There are few things worse than getting into a punch-up, but one of those things is getting into a punch-up with a ridiculously oversized Hip Hop superstar who's spitting rhymes at you as you attempt to demolish his face. No, squaring off to X-to-the-Z is quite an event, and receiving a bottle to the back of the head at considerable pace from the star of *Pimp My Ride* is something of an honour. If Tim Westwood tried it we'd hang him with his own entrails and set fire to him. We're not normally that nasty, but we've just finished a two-day stint on the preview code of EA's urban brawler, and boy do we feel up for a fight.

[Get into a punch-up with an oversized Hip Hop superstar]

Yeah, the next guy that bumps into us on the way to the toilet is gonna get a two-pound lump hammer round the back of the head followed by a succession of joint-tearing submission moves and career-ending grapples. That's the kind of rabid, festering hatred that the game imbues the player with. Everyone hates Sean Paul so when the opportunity arrives to throw him out of a 20-story window or in front of a beautifully drawn, but incredibly speedy subway train, we'll take it. We'll take it with both hands, strangle it to within an inch of its life and then, once it's dead, stand over its lifeless corpse and reel off some derogatory trash about its now grieving mother. Yeah. It's that good.

So, it's hot and fresh out the kitchen, sure, but what does *Def Jam* bring to the ghetto table? Can we expect a high phat diet when this hits the shelves, or are we looking at something with a little less flava? For starters, if you've played any of the previous games in the series you'll



Now this is a match-up and a half. Who can be the most annoying rapper turned TV goon? We hope Flava Flav loses at least three teeth and an arm

This is what Tom looks like in real life - honest. He's been into tattoos for years and has always loved the bling

be aware of the deal. Essentially it's up to you to punish rival gangstas in the face with a combination of your 'cuffs, feet and tools. It's never been a particularly innovative affair, with the standard array of health bars, special bars and basic combat, but the visceral nature of the action makes for some truly wince-inducing gameplay that just never gets boring. Each match-up starts with some obligatory trash talking, and a pre-determined shove, punch or grapple that leaves you with different openings to the bouts. 'Cuff someone over the dome with a metal pipe, for example and you'll start the fight with them sprawling on the floor crying for their momma. From this point, the obvious choice is to dive on top of them and brain them with a series of forearm blows to the noggin. Go into an armbar or cross face from that and you'll soon accumulate enough 'blaze' to pull off a special grapple manoeuvre. These specials really make the difference and there's little more satisfying than finishing a match with one of the many gruesome combination finishers. Especially when it's Sean Paul on the receiving end. In short, they're boned. Granted the intro beat downs are a pretty much 50/50 affair, often leaving your opponent with the upper hand, but this kind of simple, yet effective addition makes *Def Jam* all the more enjoyable.

So what of the combat? Previous games offered a different kind of brawler to most, favouring brutal environmental attacks over the usual striking and grappling. The PSP iteration doesn't suffer any kind of control issues and fans will find little to turn them off in this version. Bottles still break satisfyingly against Sean Paul's head. Snooker cues still inflict massive damage to Sean Paul's skull and breaking Sean Paul's neck has never been quite so enjoyable. We just wish we could have 20 minutes alone with him to see how close to the real thing AKI Corporation has managed to get. Guess we'll never know.

[Punish rival gangstas in the face with 'cuffs, feet and tools]

The other talent you encounter during the grizzly fights ranges from the legendary, like Snoop Dogg and Ice-T to the slightly more obscure, such as Slick Rick, to the downright hateful, namely Sean Paul. There's a whole bunch of the guys from the hood representing, each clearly

This is our crib. We always thought gangsta cribs were a little less, well, skanky

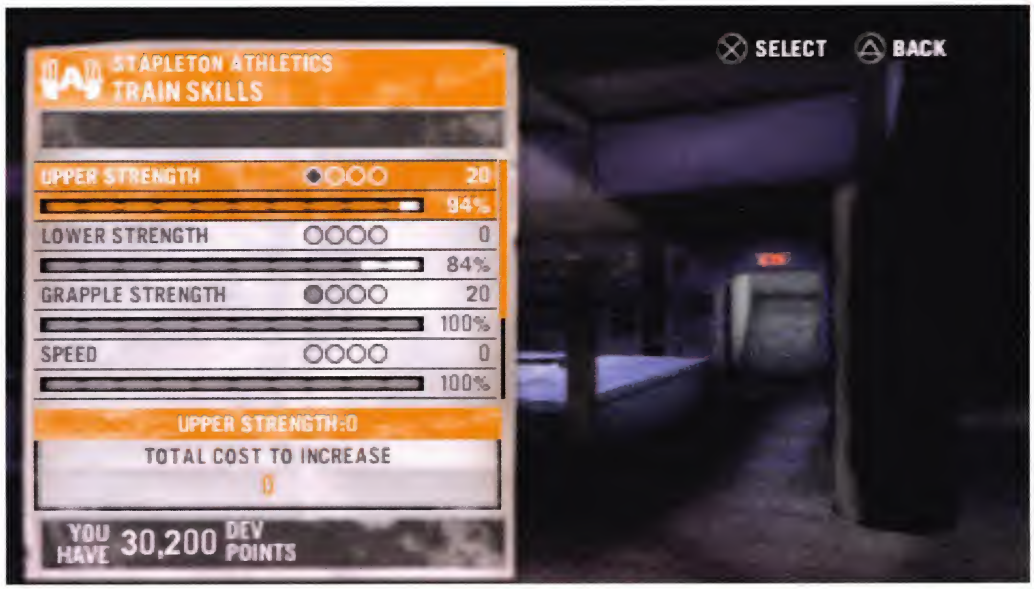
This screenshot is boring, but look how hot the skagg below is. What a hottie

having had a merry jolly to buffdom and back, and it has to be said that the likenesses, while a little over flattering, are accurate enough to be believable. We're not sure exactly how true to life the storyline might be, but it gives you a good excuse to pummel the crap out of pretty much everyone you meet across all areas of New York. An interesting twist occurs around midway through the game, and you gain control of your very own gang, which you can raise from the streets. This changes things completely, as with your 15-man team you've got a massive array of fighting styles and abilities to throw down in each bout. Your personal development doesn't stop there however, and you're still given the opportunity to level up your character and add to his range of moves and fighting styles with the help of Henry Rollins' gym. It's not just your skills you can level up either, as you can constantly adjust your created character with new tats, threads and 'dos throughout the game. Needless to say , there's a whole load of licensed gear to buy, not to mention the playlist, which features many of the most popular Hip Hop tunes around.

The varying fighting styles don't offer a huge difference in combat, but with each of the three additions you're allowed, your stats are altered and whilst your character retains some of the manoeuvres from previous styles, the predominant move set is determined by the last style chosen. So when you get tired of your fighting style it's just a case of popping to Henry's Gym and working out with the tattooed terror. Combined with the addition of a crew to boss about, and a load of speciality matches, this looks to be a surprisingly deep fighter.

Def Jam Fight For New York: The Takeover is one of those few 'street' titles that allows you to overlook the over-the-top gangsta feel and enjoy the game. The real draw however, is the brutality and downright nasty nature of the combat. It may just mean we're sick in the head, but we'll never get tired of kicking Sean Paul in the nuts. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

WE SAY **The cathartic experience of pounding on Sean Paul before throwing him in front of a subway train is incomparably great.**



After four years away he lives again!

GITAROO MAN LIVES!

OUT: SEPT '06

Publisher **Koei** / Developer **In-house** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
A rhythm game that's as crazy as you'd expect, with a bizarre plot and weird characters

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Two Wi-Fi multi-player modes
- Music and vocals by Japanese pop stars
- 10 different battles
- Proof that ports aren't always bad
- Refined controls for PSP

Those of you out there who love rhythm-based games are in for a treat, as a port of the PS2 *Gitaroo Man* is heading to PSP later this year.

You take on the role of a rather nervous boy called U-1, who is accompanied by his dog Puma. U-1 is hopelessly in love with Pico and is constantly endeavouring to get her attention, albeit unsuccessfully. U-1's rival Kazuya, who is always picking on him, doesn't help matters either. Things don't look good for our plucky hero until he inherits the legacy of the legendary superhero Gitaroo Man, however, U-1 has no interest in becoming a superhero until his persuasive pooch changes his mind and encourages him to learn how to play the magic gitraroo.

This insane plot sees an evil character called Panpeus attempting to take the gitaroo from U-1 and so sets in motion a series of 10 battles that encompasses a wide array of musical styles from folk to disco. Each battle sees you facing one of the musically themed characters who defy the laws of normality. Three phases make up each battle, with different approaches required for each one. As you press the required buttons or move the analog nub in the correct way you'll build up health to prepare you for the battle phase. In this even tougher phase, button icons will scroll across the screen from four different directions and you'll need to hit the right button as they reach the centre of the screen. The better you fare the more damage you'll do to your opponent, but do badly and you'll be the one getting hurt.

The controls have been made more forgiving for this PSP version, mainly due to the analog nub having a much smaller range of motion in comparison to a PS2 pad. This doesn't mean the game is any easier though, as some of the levels will leave your head spinning.

Gitaroo Man Lives! is a straight port, but that shouldn't stop it from being a PSP classic. ■ **Simon Griffin**

[Musically themed characters who defy the laws of normality]

WE SAY **Looks incredibly challenging and offers perfect bite-size levels ideal for a portable machine. For once a straight port we're glad to see.**

It's Mojo King Bee. He plays a trumpet. No, we've never seen a bee do that either

It's a battle in full swing. Who's winning? We're not really sure to be honest

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Smooth, that's how we do it

MIAMI VICE: THE GAME

OUT: JULY '06

Publisher **Vivendi** / Developer **Rebellion** / Players **1-2**

WHAT IS IT?
Videogame based around the forthcoming Hollywood blockbuster movie

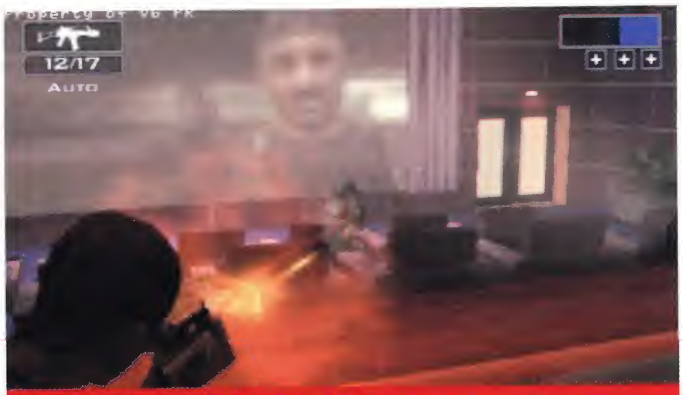
EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- Two-player co-op
- More than just a shooter
- Boat sections
- Buy and sell drugs for info
- Hack computers

Movie licences, eh? Why does anyone bother? For every *GoldenEye* that improves their reputation, there's a *Catwoman* that dashes them. That's a con for *Miami Vice* right there and that's before we get to the game based on the TV series, which was something of an abomination if we remember correctly. Wait a minute before you stop reading though, as this does have an upside. You see, this *Miami Vice* game has a different developer, different publisher and even different source material, in the form of the soon-to-be-released Michael Mann movie. The trailers for the movie are looking pretty awesome and it also looks to be packed with plenty of fast cars, babes, guns and of course, style.

The question is, can this style be translated into a videogame successfully? From the look of it, Rebellion seems to have captured the essence of the movie with various exotic locations and moody lighting that looks just like the movie. Okay so Crockett and Tubbs don't really look or sound like Colin Farrell or Jamie Foxx, but they're a decent approximation. Anyway that really isn't the important thing; what will make this game sink or swim is how it plays.

As you'd expect, playing the part of an undercover cop, there are plenty of chances to shoot lowlife scum, but there's also plenty of chances to deal with them too. While the main part of the game sees you involved in firefights, the ease or difficulty you have in those encounters is determined by how much information you have before the start of each mission. This is extracted from informants

The hacking mini-game is bizarre at first, but once you get the hang of it you'll be cracking stuff open like a pro



If you could gun all the annoying people in a cinema down, wouldn't life be so much easier? Talking over the top of a film isn't big or clever, got that?

by paying them off with drugs that you've found in previous missions. If you failed to get your hands on any then you can instead buy some from various dealers around the city or alternatively, you can sell to those dealers for cash, which can be spent upgrading your weapons or, of course, your wardrobe. You may be getting the impression that all this is done in a free-roaming environment like *GTA*, but sadly it's done via a map interface. However, it all works incredibly well and there's even a slight element of strategy to it as drug prices fluctuate, altering how much you can buy and sell them for.

As we said though, the main part of the game is shooting up the place with a big gun. You can choose to play as Crockett or Tubbs or, via the wonder of Wi-Fi, you can play two-player and argue over who gets to be who. There's no advantage to being either character and one can blast the hell out of a bad guy just as good as the other.

Once you make your choice you see that the game looks a little similar to *Dead To Rights*, but don't worry, it plays nothing like it. Not only is there no silly bullet-time, it's also far better to control. The developers have removed the need of a second analog by forcing you to stop and aim when you want to shoot. Sounds awkward but the level design means you're never put into a situation where you're facing enemies on all sides, so you don't need to always move the camera around. The levels are also designed with cover in mind and there is always something for you to hide behind while you pick your shot. This doesn't mean that your enemies will just stand in the open waiting to take two in the chest though. They will also seek cover and run around to confuse you, meaning you have to pick your shots carefully. This AI really impressed us and was far better than the suicidal enemies in the aforementioned EA title.

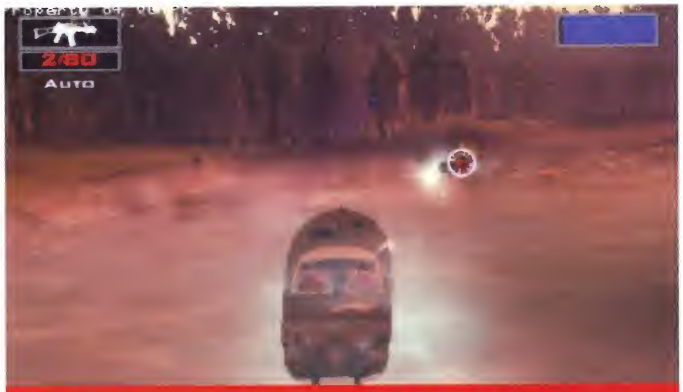
[Will this be a **movie licence game** that doesn't totally stink?]

Land isn't the only place you'll be taking law to the lawless, as with Miami being near to the water there's a few boat-based levels too. While they were reasonably fun, they don't compare to the on-foot sections and the AI is somewhat dimmer. However, the code we played is not yet complete so perhaps that will be worked on.

Overall, *Miami Vice* seems to be shaping up quite nicely and probably benefits from being a PSP-exclusive. Could this be one of those rare movie licence games that doesn't totally stink? All being well we should be able to tell you the answer next issue. ■ **Simon Griffin**

A traditional Miami nightclub - giant lava lamps and guns

WE SAY **While not the most frenetic shoot-'em-up we've ever encountered, Miami Vice seems to have had a little thought put into it, which is nice.**



The boat sections aren't great but they give you a brief change of pace from the on-foot sections

Dirty snitch

Do you understand the meaning of the word foreboding?

We do. One of the features that makes *Miami Vice* far more involving than your average shooter is the ability to buy info about missions. You can find out the locations of every enemy, Flashdrive and drug packet and even where the controls to turn off the CCTV are. Some may say that it takes away the challenge, but you don't have to buy the information. The enemies don't go down easy so it's handy to get a heads up.

With $1,000 to spend the world is our oyster, and that chick is flashing her legs – aah, life is good

If the mood takes you the option to sport a *Phantom Of The Opera*-style mask is available. What could be better?

Viva Las Vegas and this virtual approximation!

PLAYWIZE POKER & CASINO

OUT: OCT '06

Publisher **505 Gamestreet** / Developer **Bits Studios** / Players **1**

WHAT IS IT?
Taking the gambling sim to the next level, this offers far more than just a poker table

EXPRESS CHECKOUT
- 4 casinos to explore
- Customisable characters
- Vegas without the heat
- In-depth control system
- Multi-player? Who knows, probably

No wonder we're all in debt with gambling temptation everywhere you look these days. Fortunately the recent upsurge in videogame gambling titles means that at least we can get a gambling fix without losing our house in the process.

Poker is clearly the most popular game at the moment, with an abundance of games based around it and now 505 Gamestreet is bringing us an even more expansive experience with *Playwize Poker & Casino*. It offers four virtual casinos, all beautifully rendered in 3D that are filled to the rafters with games to play and fellow gamblers to meet. As you wander round you'll see a selection of dice tables, poker games, slot machines and everything else that you'd expect to find in a gambler's paradise.

Players are given the opportunity to lose their money in many different ways with roulette, craps, blackjack, baccarat, red dog, variations of poker and plenty of slots. All of these can be found in the four casinos, which you will visit in succession as your skill improves. You start in the Egyptian Kings Casino and after hours of winning and losing, you'll finally find yourself in the halls of the glitzy Skies The Limit Casino.

While wandering around these Vegas-like locations you need to look the part and *Playwize* allows you to customise your character and choose from a variety of models and outfits. As you progress through the game you can spend your winnings in the casino boutiques, buying designer clothes and as much bling as your eyes can take. The character models not only show off a sense of style but will also show emotion, so if you're on a losing streak expect to see your alter ego slouching, giving away your run of bad luck.

Controlling your character couldn't be easier too, with a context-sensitive control system that offers up a tremendous number of options. Not only can you raise and lower bets as you'd expect, but you can also taunt opponents, bluff or even blow on the dice if you think it will improve your chances.

If you're a wannabe gambler but don't like the idea of losing your own money, *Playwize Poker & Casino* could prove to be the perfect title for you. ■ **Simon Griffin**

WE SAY **It certainly looks to offer plenty of variety, but with so much on offer, will every game be that in-depth?**

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WI-FI FIFA WORLD CUP GO>PLAY 2006

So, the wait is over and the World Cup is finally here. We couldn't wait for it though, so we felt it necessary to create our very own to satiate our hunger for World Cup glory. Quite exactly why we chose to play *FIFA* is still a bit of a mystery, but with all the official licences and distinctive World Cup flavour, it had to be really – although it was a decision lamented many times during the course of the tournament. Taking four teams at a time and drawing them randomly out of the hat, Deputy Editor Simon, Staff Writer Tom and Designer Andy, along with one computer-controlled team, faced-off against each other with the help of a handy wall chart to give us a whiff of what kind of thrills and spills this year's World Cup would deliver. It took a lot of time, effort and money in the swear box, but we finally managed to find a winner.

GROUP A

Simon	Germany	1	0	Costa Rica	Andy
Tom	Poland	0	1	Ecuador	CPU
Simon	Germany	1	1	Poland	Tom
CPU	Ecuador	2	0	Costa Rica	Andy
CPU	Ecuador	1	0	Germany	Simon
Andy	Costa Rica	0	1	Poland	Tom

Group A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ecuador	3	0	0	4	0	9
Germany	1	1	1	2	2	4
Poland	1	1	1	2	2	4
Costa Rica	0	0	3	0	4	0

GROUP A

Something of a surprise result this one. Shock winners CPU-controlled Ecuador, pounded fellow minnows Poland and Costa Rica, as well as host nation Germany. In what turned out to be one of the most tense and exciting matches of the tournament, the battle for second place was decided by the two contenders Poland and Germany – played by Tom and Simon respectively. Ending in a 1-1 draw the result meant the drawing of straws to decide who the second place went to. Jip master Simon managed to secure a place in the last 16 with the draw, sending both Tom's proud Poland and Andy's humiliated Costa Rica home.

GROUP B

CPU	England	0	0	Paraguay	Tom
Andy	Trin & Tob	0	2	Sweden	Simon
CPU	England	0	0	Trin & Tob	Andy
Simon	Sweden	1	1	Paraguay	Tom
Simon	Sweden	0	1	England	CPU
Tom	Paraguay	1	0	Trin & Tob	Andy

Group B	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paraguay	1	2	0	2	1	5
England	1	2	0	1	0	5
Sweden	1	1	1	3	2	4
Trin & Tob	0	1	2	0	3	1

GROUP B

England's group, and one that all eyes in the office were on. With both Sweden and Paraguay in the running, as well as dark horses Trinidad and Tobago, this could be anyone's. As it turned out, Tom's mighty Paraguay and the computer-controlled England managed to outclass Simon's Sweden and Andy's Trin and Tob. Having accrued only one point in six matches and yet to score, Andy was looking like a bit of a death knell for his teams. Another draw between Simon and Tom this time helped knock Simon's Swedes out of the competition. Ha! Payback!

SHOCK FACT!
102 of the 736 World Cup footballers in this year's tournament actually play their football in England.

SHOCK FACT!
The smallest ever World Cup crowd was 300 to see Romania versus Peru in 1930.

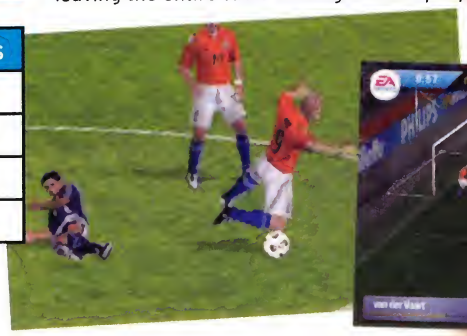
GROUP C

Andy	Argentina	0	1	Ivory Coast	CPU
Simon	Serb & Mont	3	1	Holland	Tom
Andy	Argentina	0	0	Serb & Mont	Simon
Tom	Holland	2	2	Ivory Coast	CPU
Tom	Holland	1	0	Argentina	Andy
CPU	Ivory Coast	1	0	Serb & Mont	Simon

Group C	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ivory Coast	2	1	0	4	2	7
Serbia	1	1	1	3	2	4
Holland	1	1	1	4	5	4
Argentina	0	1	2	0	2	1

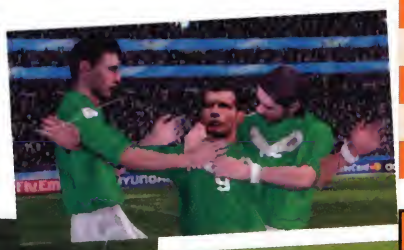
GROUP C

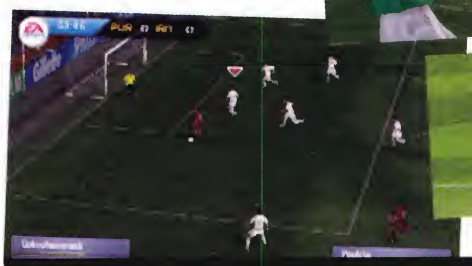
With Andy taking control of Argentina, things were looking grim for the South American football maestros, especially with their hitman Crespo severely injured in two of their three matches. And so, in the biggest shock so far, they managed to sink to the very bottom of the table with Andy still failing to hit the back of the net. Tom's Holland team similarly failed to make the grade with some weak performances, leaving a CPU-controlled Ivory Coast to storm to victory on the back of a string of goals from Didier Drogba. Simon's Serbia, despite some particularly weak performances managed to sneak through on goal difference, leaving the entire table looking distinctly topsy-turvy.



GROUP D

This group was amongst the easiest to call, with the computer taking control of favourites Portugal. There were some rather upsetting occurrences however, the first being the disgusting nature of both the Mexican and Angolan attitudes, receiving a total of four red cards between them in the group stage. In an oversight on FIFA's part, when Angola played Iran they seemed to be wearing identical kits. This clearly confused the Angolan keeper, giving Andy his first goal in the tournament. Mexico played better than the table implies and came close to a win over the mighty Portugal, racking up an impressive 14 shots on goal to 4.





GROUP D

Simon	Mexico	0	0	Iran	Andy
Tom	Angola	0	1	Portugal	CPU
Simon	Mexico	2	0	Angola	Tom
CPU	Portugal	1	0	Iran	Andy
CPU	Portugal	2	1	Mexico	Simon
Andy	Iran	2	0	Angola	Tom

Group D	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Portugal	3	0	0	4	1	9
Mexico	1	1	1	3	2	4
Iran	1	1	1	2	1	4
Angola	0	0	3	0	5	0

SHOCK FACT!
Togo are one of eight debutant sides in the 2006 World Cup.

GROUP E

Andy	USA	0	0	Czech Rep	CPU
Simon	Italy	0	2	Ghana	Tom
Simon	Italy	2	0	USA	Andy
CPU	Czech Rep	2	0	Ghana	Tom
CPU	Czech Rep	1	1	Italy	Simon
Tom	Ghana	1	0	USA	Andy

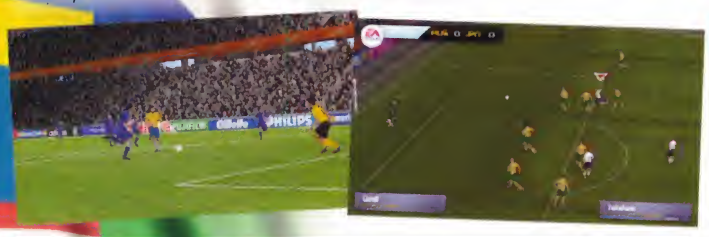
Group E	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ghana	2	0	1	3	2	6
Czech Rep	1	2	0	3	1	5
Italy	1	1	1	3	3	4
USA	0	1	2	0	3	1

GROUP E

Rated third in the world, the CPU's Czechs looked set to dominate the group, but in a tense 1-1 thriller between them and the other favourites, Simon's Italy couldn't snaffle the win to take them through. Tom's Ghana – the group underdogs – took on all comers and lost, albeit comprehensively, to third seeded Czech Republic, who showed a devastating display of skill and a flurry of late goals to decimate Simon's Italy and Andy's USA. Andy's scoring record didn't improve, and by a spectacular show of ineptitude, managed to turn draws into defeats for the USA with a series of penalties handed to the opposition.

GROUP F

With Simon picking Brazil out of the hat, there was little doubt that it'd wind up being three out of three for the favourites against the CPU's Australia, Tom's Japan and Andy's Croatia. However, in one of the dullest groups so far, only two matches stuck out as being worth watching: Simon's 3-0 bapping of Japan, who were looking to sneak into the runner-up spot and the computer's breathtaking display of mad skills as Australia managed to break down the Brazilian defence and slide the match's only goal into the net, leaving them only having to draw against Andy's Croatia to go through. Having conceded just a single goal in the whole group their place in the last 16 was almost entirely on the shoulders of the Aussie back four.

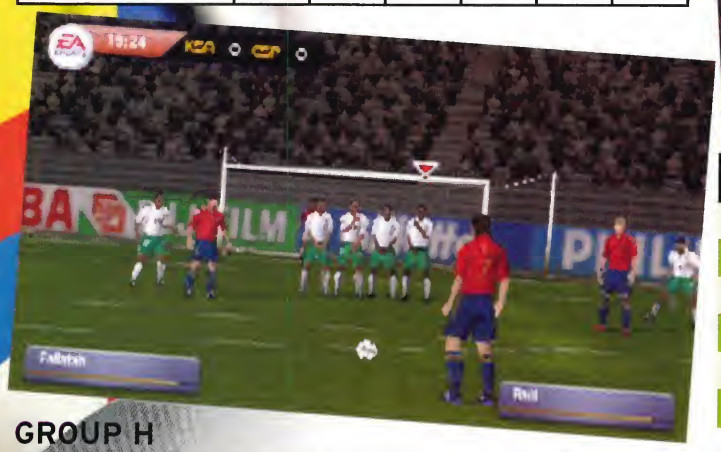


GROUP F						
CPU	Australia	1	1	Japan	Tom
Simon	Brazil	1	0	Croatia	Andy
Tom	Japan	3	1	Croatia	Andy
Simon	Brazil	0	1	Australia	CPU
Tom	Japan	0	3	Brazil	Simon
Andy	Croatia	0	0	Australia	CPU

Group F	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Brazil	2	0	1	4	1	6
Australia	1	2	0	2	1	5
Japan	1	1	1	4	5	4
Croatia	0	1	2	1	4	1

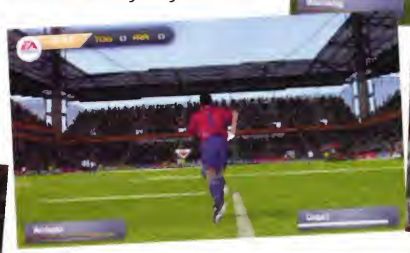
GROUP G					
Simon	South Korea	1	0	Togo	Tom
CPU	France	1	0	Switzerland	Andy
CPU	France	1	0	South Korea	Simon
Tom	Togo	0	1	Switzerland	Andy
Tom	Togo	0	1	France	CPU
Andy	Switzerland	0	0	South Korea	Simon

Group G	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
France	3	0	0	3	0	9
South Korea	1	1	1	1	1	4
Switzerland	1	1	1	1	1	4
Togo	0	0	3	0	3	0



GROUP G

Another dull group, and one that saw the CPU's France dominate entirely, conceding no goals, but doing just enough to clinically break apart the back line of Simon's South Korea, Andy's Switzerland and Tom's Togo. Unable to score any goals and only having a paltry two shots on target throughout the entire group stage, Togo's dreams were dashed spectacularly by three 1-0 defeats, leaving S. Korea and Switzerland even on points, goal difference and goals for. Andy's best chance to qualify was dashed, quite literally, by the luck of the draw when Simon drew the winning ticket. The office jip-o-meter was going mental.



GROUP H					
CPU	Spain	1	1	Ukraine	Tom
Andy	Tunisia	2	0	Saudi Arabia	Simon
Simon	Saudi Arabia	0	0	Ukraine	Tom
CPU	Spain	1	0	Tunisia	Andy
Simon	Saudi Arabia	0	0	Spain	CPU
Tom	Ukraine	0	0	Tunisia	Andy

Group H	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Spain	1	2	0	2	1	5
Tunisia	1	1	1	2	1	4
Ukraine	0	3	0	1	1	3
Saudi Arabia	0	2	1	0	2	2

GROUP H

The final group, featuring one of the World Cup favourites, Spain. With Simon having drawn to play as Saudi Arabia, it was a toss up between Andy's Tunisia and Tom's Ukraine to go through. With Shevchenko not on form, the Ukranians could only manage one goal in three games, leaving them with three points from a possible nine. In an exciting finale to the group, Andy and Tom battled it out in the last group game for the right to go through. After some of the most frenetic pinball passing and cleverly worked forward play, the deadlock couldn't be broken, leaving a very happy Andy with a route through to the last 16.

LAST 16

SHOCK FACT!
The largest ever World Cup crowd was in 1950, where almost 200,000 people crammed themselves into a Brazilian stadium to watch Uruguay vs Brazil.

SHOCK FACT!
This is the first and last time Serbia and Montenegro will play under the same flag.

(1) WINNER A VS RUNNER-UP B

Tom **ECUADOR 1-2 ENGLAND** Andy

With Tom taking control of Ecuador, and Andy captaining the English Lions, things weren't looking too clever for our boys. Against the run of play Ecuador struck early gold with a perfectly worked shot that sailed past three defenders and the keeper to put England on the back foot. With an embarrassment of scoring chances however, England were soon back in it when Frank Lampard fired home a forty yard scorcher in the 29th minute. It was another 44 minutes until the next goal from Owen and apart from one dangerous looking attempt from Tenorio in the dying stages, there was little to worry Robinson.

(2) WINNER C VS RUNNER-UP D

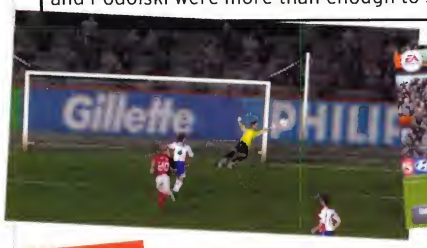
Simon **IVORY COAST 0-1 MEXICO** CPU

Simon squared off against the CPU's Mexico with more than a little trepidation. Taking it to the Mexicans with a period of frenetic activity culminating in several decent chances on goal, the Ivory Coast seemed to be spent after the first few minutes and conceded what turned out to be the winning goal. With the rest of the match bogged down in midfield, a recovery seemed – and indeed was – completely out of the question.

(3) WINNER B VS RUNNER-UP A

Andy **PARAGUAY 0-2 GERMANY** CPU

Up against a computer-controlled Germany, Andy's Paraguay could do little to threaten the German goal, totalling up less than one shot on target over the entire match. What he did to make up for it, however, was deliver some of the most revolting football ever seen on a football pitch. Getting away with only one yellow card, two goals from Ballack and Podolski were more than enough to send Paraguay packing.



(4) WINNER D VS RUNNER-UP C

Simon **PORTUGAL 1-2 SERB&MONT** Tom

Simon's Portuguese were a clear favourite over Tom's proud Serbians, but rather than sit back and take it, the boys in blue attacked the greasy Portuguese, and after some heavy pressure in the first half, Andrade managed to concede an own goal in the dying minutes of the first 45. After a heavily disputed decision in the second-half, Luis Figo managed to deliver a punishing free kick to level the match. A last-minute goal from Zigic in the second-half of extra-time made it the game of the tournament so far.

(5) WINNER E VS RUNNER-UP F

Simon **GHANA 0-1 AUSTRALIA** CPU

Having performed so well in the group stage, high flying Ghana were put under Simon's control, while the CPU took charge of the Socceroos. Ghana couldn't maintain possession and struggled to dispossess the Aussies in their own half. In a career-ending tackle by Kewell, Steven Appiah had to be stretchered off, angering the Ghanaians into playing some of the roughest football ever. There were more than a few battered Australians after that match. We like that.

SHOCK FACT!
Several of the sponsored stadiums have been stripped of their advertising and re-branded as FIFA stadiums.

(6) WINNER G VS RUNNER-UP H

Andy **FRANCE 4-0 TUNISIA** Tom

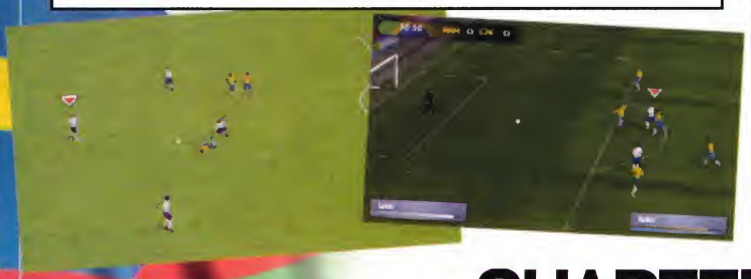
Something of a rout from start to finish, Andy's Frenchmen managed to disassemble the Tunisians with ease. Following a scorching goal by Zinadine Zidane in which he managed to get enough space to perform a series of tricks in the box, Henry's hat-trick excited the crowd and gave Andy something of a confidence boost. With only one shot on goal at the midway point in the match, Tunisia never looked to be anything other than an annoyance to France. Some showboating in the last 20 minutes gave the crowds more to cheer about and by the end of the match the French were looking unbeatable.

SHOCK FACT! India didn't play in the 1950 World Cup because they refused to play with any footwear.

(7) WINNER F VS RUNNER-UP E

CPU **BRAZIL 0-1 CZECH REPUBLIC** Andy

In the highest seeded match-up so far, top seeds Brazil (controlled by the computer) simply couldn't break through Andy's Czech defence. A single goal in the first-half by Jan Koller separated the teams, but anyone expecting an exciting match was seriously disappointed. Only four shots on goal from the free-flowing Brazilians and a paltry two from the Eastern Europeans, there was little to get excited about.



(8) WINNER H VS RUNNER-UP G

Simon **SPAIN 2(9P)-2(10P) SOUTH KOREA** Tom

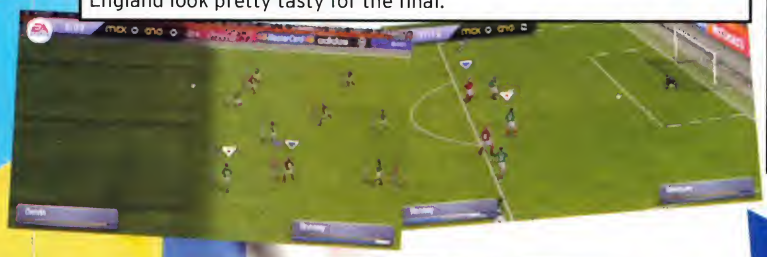
Hailed as the best match of the championship, Tom's South Korean side squared-off against the Spanish in a match that ran the full 120 minutes, featured a total of 23 shots and had to be decided by a sudden death penalty shoot-out of truly epic proportions. A first-half show of dominance by the Spanish was marred only by a cleverly lobbed free kick in the 31st minute, and in extra-time the pace was such that Kim Nam-Il suffered a serious injury. Simon's Spain finally lost due to Raul sending the ball way over the goalmouth and into the stands, putting South Korea into the Quarter Finals.

QUARTER FINALS

(A) WINNER 1 VS WINNER 2

Andy **ENGLAND 2-0 MEXICO** Tom

In an even game, the chances for both teams were few and far between. Breaking the deadlock, Frank Lampard - England's top scorer so far - pumped a 40-yard screamer into Mexico's net. Continuing as before, the Mexicans had good chances to score, but simply couldn't deliver up front. Steven Gerrard bapped another in from around the half-way line in the 73rd minute to put the game beyond any doubt, giving Andy yet another victory and making England look pretty tasty for the final.



(B) WINNER 5 VS WINNER 6

CPU **AUSTRALIA 0-3 FRANCE** Simon

Taking control of the French from Andy, Simon continued in the same vein with some all-out attacking play, scoring with Trezeguet after just three minutes. The goal fest continued into the second half with another from Trezeguet and a little something to round it off from Zidane in the last ten minutes. The final stats show the effectiveness of the French line-up, with over double the amount of shots on goal than the Australians had. France are looking like the clear favourites.

(C) WINNER 3 VS WINNER 4

Andy **GERMANY 0(1P)-0(3P) SERB&MONT** Tom

Having scraped through to this stage of the competition, Andy's German contingent - surprisingly - aren't looking like the favourite in this tousle with Tom's Serbian wrecking ball. With the Serbians taking the majority of the possession, but wasting every chance they got in the first-half, frustration obviously got the better of them and they began playing a little dirty. The mighty Germans simply couldn't penetrate the Serbian defence, and failed to get a single shot on goal throughout the 120 minutes of tense football. Having missed a completely open goal in the 94th minute, the Serbians had to settle for a shoot-out to determine the winner. Only scoring one of their five penalties, the hosts Germany bowed out of the competition, putting Serbia into the Semis.

(D) WINNER 7 VS WINNER 8

CPU **CZECH REPUBLIC 1-0 S.KOREA** Simon

An incredibly dull match this one, and one only decided by an 80th minute free kick resulting from an altercation just outside the South Korean box. Other goals are scored, but cruelly disallowed for offside. Poborsky comes close numerous times, and decimates the Korean back line with some astounding running. At the end of the day the Koreans were simply overworked and outclassed to the tune of a single goal.

SHOCK FACT! Australia beat American Samoa 31-0 in a preliminary match in 2001. 31-0!

SEMI FINALS

WINNER C VS WINNER D

CPU **SERB&MONT 1-0 CZECH REPUBLIC** Tom

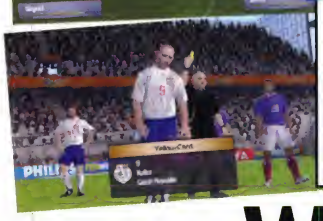
Third seed versus the number 25th ranked team in the world. Tom's Czech Republic were going great guns against the Serbians until a nigh on impossible header from Kezman from the rebound of a free kick given for a dubious challenge just outside the box put the Serbs ahead. With only 12 minutes to go, the Czechs instigated a flurry of activity and ladeled on all the cunning tactics they could, but to no avail. Down to ten men and desperate for the goal that would give them a little extra time to win the match, the despair hanging over the Czech team was palpable. With Baros and Koller making sterling chances for each other there was little to do but hope for a last-minute equaliser. Despite about a hundred great chances, the Serbs stayed strong and guaranteed their spot in World Cup history with a place in the final.

WINNER A VS WINNER B

Simon **ENGLAND 0(2P)-0(0P) FRANCE** Andy

With Andy being on form with France, and Simon drawing the mighty English, this match looked to be the most exciting to date. Sadly it wasn't and with a mere 11 shots on goal for the entire match between both teams, it looked like both Andy and Simon had bottled it in the most supreme style. Ending 0-0 after normal time and the allotted extra-time, it was another match to be decided by penalties. Robinson did our boys proud, and managed to save every shot, leaving England's penalty takers the easy task of bapping in a couple of goals to take England through to the final. The final score? 2-0 to England on penalties. We'll probably never hear that in real life will we?

3/4 PLACE PLAY-OFF



LOSER SF1 VS LOSER SF2

Andy **FRANCE 0(4P)-0(3P) CZECH** Tom

A dejected France and hopeless Czech Republic faced-off for the third-place spot with little passion and even less skill. A magnificent array of terrible shots on goal from Henry forced Andy to substitute the seemingly drunk player, giving Sylvan Wiltord his first bash at World Cup glory. The run of play went easily for the Czechs, but Baros and Koller simply didn't have the balls to finish the match. Ending in penalties after two tiresome halves of extra time, the jammy French nicked it with Bartez quite literally saving the day.

WORLD CUP FINAL 2006

WINNER SF1 VS WINNER SF2

Simon **ENGLAND 2-1 SERB&MONT** CPU

This was it. Simon's England versus the CPU's Serbia & Montenegro. Early pressure from the English immediately put Serbia on the back foot. So much so in fact that the amount of possession held by England forced the Serbs to huddle around their goal like a small family of meerkats protecting their young. This soon led to a strong penalty appeal from Rooney in the 24th minute, but one which wasn't upheld. Beckham delivered enough of a teaser to force the Serbian keeper Dragoslav Jevric to punch it out for a corner. Cue 20 minutes of pressure applied by progressively more accurate corner kicks, followed by a break from the Serbs to threaten Robinson's goal. Right on the half-time whistle however, the deadlock was broken, with an Owen scorcher. After much shouting and jumping around, Simon finally sits down to take on the Serbs for the second-half. An absolute rout ensues, with Rooney, Beckham, Cole and Owen firing shot after shot at the poor beleaguered Serb between the posts only to have said keeper boot it right out to Kezman and have him run in a goal in the middle of the second-half. The match then degenerated into desperation with the passing, tackling and shooting becoming sloppy. One such sloppy challenge saw Rooney seriously crippled and swapped for a fresh Defoe just before the match went into extra time. Continuing in the same vein for some time, it took a full 14 minutes of extra time for Owen to blast home his next, leaving Serbia with much to do over the remaining 16 minutes. They couldn't do anything but chase the ball, as England, rather unsportingly ran the clock down in their own half. England are world champions for the first time in 40 years. The crowd erupt, as does Simon who looks like he's going to have a heart attack. As captain David Beckham raises the World Cup a tear forms in Simon's eye, giving us a glimpse of what this faux World Cup has meant to him.

So, there it is. England win the World Cup. Just think about it for a minute or two. We know you're not going to believe it, but we played absolutely honestly and there wasn't any kind of match fixing or patriotic cheating going on – honestly. No, really. England won fair and square, and if that's not a good enough sign for you to pop down the bookies and put a score on England to win, we don't know what is.

So what were the highlights and lowlights of the tournament, apart from giving us a little extra hope for this summer? Spain versus South Korea would probably stick out as a highlight, being a whole 120 minutes of end-to-end joy, frustration and excitement, culminating in a penalty shoot-out as tense as any in a real World Cup (well maybe not, but it was close). As far as lowlights go, there were more than a few – the most obvious being that in the Wi-Fi multi-player, the gameplay is that much slower than in the single-player mode. Combined with the sluggish reaction times of the players, it meant that few games were without their annoyances. Another problem arose with the computer's kit selection. In Wi-Fi multi-player mode, the home team sports their home kit, while the away team defaults to their away kit, making one or two of the matches pretty much unplayable if those kits happen to clash. We can heartily recommend it for any World Cup nuts out there though, as it's certainly a great deal more entertaining than listening to Gary Lineker at half-time.

REVIEWED

WE PLAY 'EM, WE R EM, YOU BUY 'EM

HIGHLIGHTS

"If you lot don't put this at the **top of the charts** we'll be very disappointed."

Find out if LocoRoco really is **deserving of your attention**, then go to the shops and buy it! **Page 56**

"With the main game being **so unforgiving** it probably won't be long before you are simply craving some **original Monkey Ball.**"

What makes the new Super Monkey Ball game **different from the original**? This insanely tough game is **played to death** and rated on **page 62**

"This is football for fun, **unashamedly entertaining** and completely without pretence."

Read why you **shouldn't dismiss** World Tour Soccer 2 on **page 66**

1 These unkempt locks are intentionally that way. No, Jon hasn't lost his comb, he doesn't need one you idiot!

2 Have you ever seen a more perfect example of designer stubble? We certainly haven't. We asked Jon if we could stroke it but he refused, shame.

3 Despite giving the impression of being desperately cool, Jon is actually throwing some shapes to S Club 7's Reach For The Stars. Loser.

4 Borrowed from the Cruiser these shades may look cool but don't have any sort of UVA protection and we all know that's the most important thing these days.

5 Jon is a man who gives deodorant the respect it deserves as you can see from the lack of sweat patches under his arms.

6 A lover of cool and ironic T-shirts, Jon wears a new one every day just to make us laugh, in an ironic way, of course.

REVIEWER OF THE MONTH

(As picked by us, out of a sack)

REVIEWER: Jon Denton
SUBJECT: Catalogue Model

CHAMP OR CHUMP?

So, what exactly have the hard-working, hot-to-trot **Go>Play** crew been up to this month? We ask them directly...

SIMON GRIFFIN

CHAMP

1 May
New Pearl Jam Album out today - not as good as *Ten* but awesome all the same!

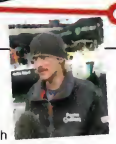
26 May
Had a spiffing day out at Thorpe park and went on every rollercoaster, cos I'm hard.

CHUMP

17 May
Sat in traffic on the M25 for two hours - kill me now!

19 May
Sat in traffic on the M25 for two hours again - nearly went postal.

29 May
Sailed the briny waters of Portsmouth harbour in a luxury yacht and sipped champagne, then saw Mackenzie Crook!



TOM LECLERC

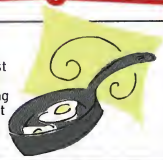
CHAMP

1 May
Found some snazzy new clip art to spice up my champ/chump.

16 May
Found these amazing virtual reality goggles, grew a moustache and started dancing in a suit. I didn't just find a funny bit of clip art. Honest.

CHUMP

12 May
Made the world's best fried breakfast for my friends and ate it while listening to mid-nineties soft rock assemblage, Thunder.



21 May
Went to a BBQ down the beach. The first of many - expect to see this bit of clip art many times this summer.

28 May
Beat GamesTM's self-proclaimed *Pro Evo* master Jon Denton in the office league, knocking him out of the competition. Cue confetti, streamers and a small ticker tape parade through the office. Bring on the semis.

ANDY MOUNTAIN

CHAMP

5 May
Had a few laughs at Twisters comedy club then topped the evening off with a great night in Bournemouth

27 May
Spent the day chilling out with friends, had some lunch and played a bit of football.

CHUMP

6 May
Made the effort to go out for a friend's birthday to find they were going home early, they must be getting old.

21 May
Spent most of the day in bed, no hangover and not ill, just too comfortable to get up.

26 May
Had a great day in Thorpe park, almost missed the bus home but just couldn't resist one last ride.

RICK PORTER

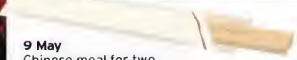
CHAMP

1 May
Went to see Dylan Moran. He's a funny chap.

18 May
Went to the Tank Museum - as uninteresting as you'd imagine.

CHUMP

9 May
Chinese meal for two turned out to be enough for five. Jackpot.



17 May
Went clubbing for my sister's birthday. Ended up in 'Club Hell'. Not good.

26 May
Thorpe Park beckoned. I got wet, then dry, then wet again.

KEITH HENNESSEY

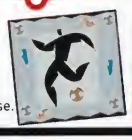
CHAMP

6 May
Bought a hammock so I could laze in the garden but was told off by the neighbours for flashing too much flesh, what will I do with that posing pouch now?

26 May
Went to Thorpe Park and took pleasure in hearing Griff scream like a girl - when he wasn't moaning about the queues of course.

CHUMP

11 May
Suffered a career-threatening injury while playing 5-a-side but was back playing the very next week... metatarsal, my arse.



18 May
Saw *X-Men III* and returned outraged, not at the film but at the price of popcorn - is there a national shortage or something?

31 May
Got my free World Cup wall chart and took the liberty of filling in all of England's results, another 5-0 it is then.

Reviewed this month

[56] LOCOROCO
It's finally here and we played with the blobs for hours, turn over for the verdict!

HIGHLIGHTS

[78] Astonishia Story
[74] Generation Of Chaos
[70] Guilty Gear XX #Reload
[68] Juiced Eliminator
[60] Micro Machines V4
[76] Pac-Man World 3
[62] Super Monkey Ball Adventure
[66] World Tour Soccer 2

How we review

The Big Question

Even the fairest-minded reviewer makes assumptions. How good have the developer's other games been? How good are the games this is up against? We outline The Big Questions...

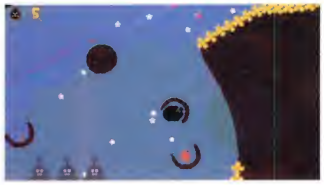
Percentage Score

It's a games mag tradition to score out of 100 per cent, and who are we to break with tradition? Chances are you know how these work, but in case you don't:

Under 30% = atrocious
Under 60% = pretty damn poor
Around 70% = now we're interested
Around 80% = well worth buying
Around 90% = fantastic. Sell your gran to get it

Summing-Up Line

The whole game boiled down to 15 or so words.



Who you tryin' to get crazy with ese? Don't you know I'm loco?

LOCOROCO

OUT: NOW

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1** / Supports **GameShare**

THE Big QUESTIONS

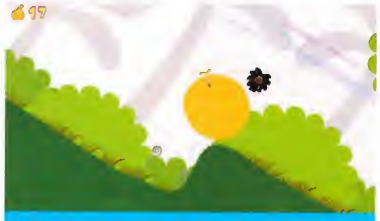
God, it looks a bit 2D, how boring...
Oh do shut up. While *LocoRoco* doesn't have the high-tech visuals of the latest racing game or shoot-'em-up, the graphics suit the game perfectly and are part of the game rather than window dressing.

Why no multi-player?
Well, if you think about how the tilting world of *LocoRoco* works, it would be quite difficult to implement a multi-player game that would allow more than one player on the screen at a time.

Bouncing gelatinous blobs doesn't immediately strike you as being the perfect basis for a videogame so when *LocoRoco* was first announced all those months ago, we admit we were somewhat skeptical. At first glance, *LocoRoco* looks incredibly simplistic. The 2D landscapes, the control system, the whole package just looked like a backward step for what is the most powerful portable games console on the market. However, the phrase 'never judge a book by its cover' has never rung truer than it does for *LocoRoco*, as it's only when you actually play the game that its hidden depths are revealed. No matter how sour faced you are or how cynical you can be when it comes to gaming, *LocoRoco* has what it takes to change your mind. Take it from a bunch of converts, the little bouncing blobs will have you hooked after just five very quick minutes.

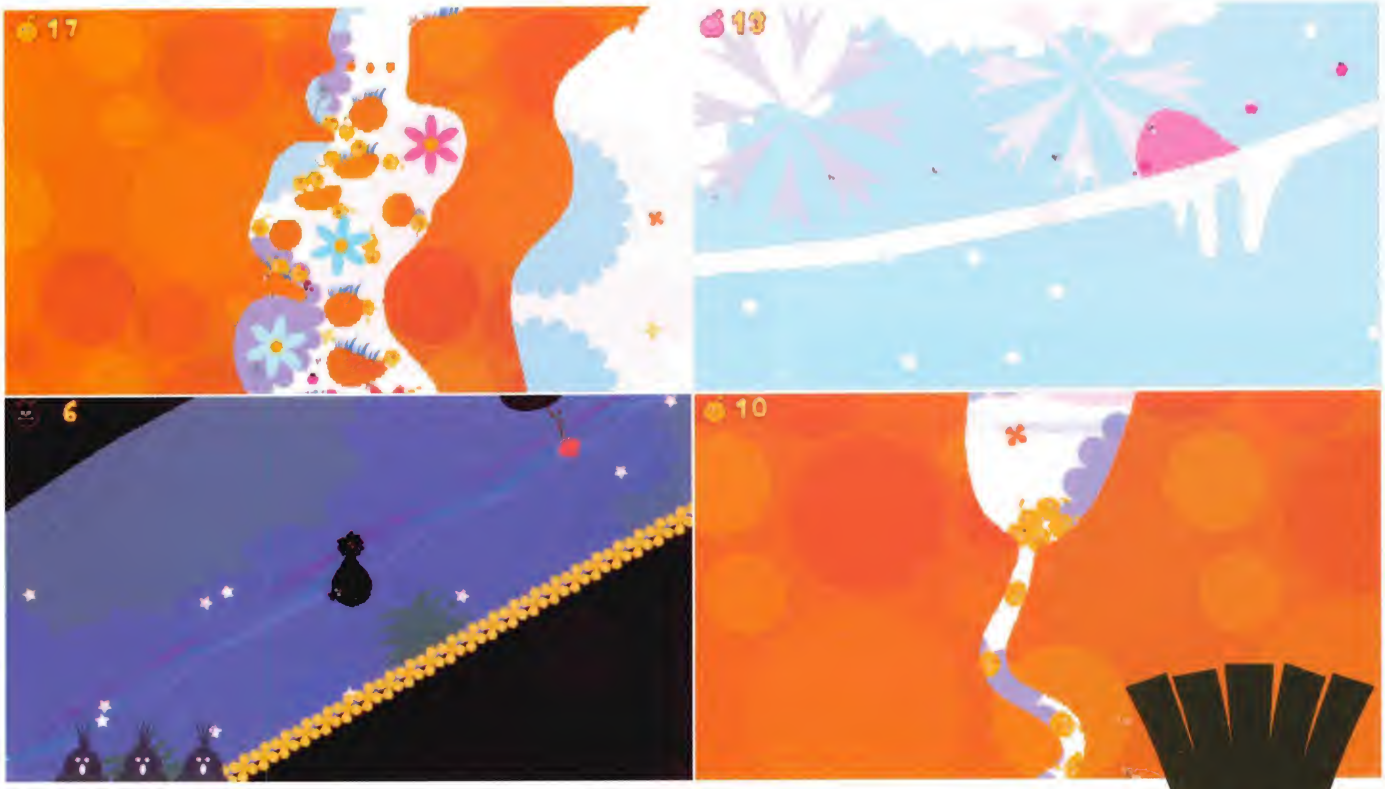
The plot is as bizarre as you would expect from a game of Japanese origin and it basically sees *LocoRoco*'s planet being invaded by evil Ojya, Mojya and Kojya and it's up to the lovable blobs to save the world. This doesn't really explain all the utter weirdness that surrounds you as you progress through the levels, but if it did then the game would lose some of its inimitable charm. You see, the surprises that constantly bombard you through every level are what keeps *LocoRoco* fresh until the very last stage and despite the simple controls, there are plenty of opportunities to send your Loco flying. The level design - bar the obvious frustrating sections - makes the game a pleasure to play. The environments you'll visit will surprise too, with the soft and fleshy insides of a monster to slippery, icy wastes all being visited, plus they all feature unique and inventive ways to keep you moving. We'd love to go into more detail but we really don't want to ruin it for you.

Most of you have probably played the demo that was doing the rounds and will know what to expect from the game and how it controls. For those of you that haven't, then you'll be in for a pleasant surprise. The shoulder buttons are all you use to control the world that surrounds the LocoRoco. Gravity is king and tilting the world will cause your Loco to roll in whatever direction gravity



Watch out for that filthy Mojya, it'll suck you dry!

The level design continually throws up more and more bizarre situations



takes it. You do have a little control over the blob and pressing both shoulder buttons will cause the Loco to jump, but that's it. With this loose connection to your character you must navigate through the weird and wonderful worlds. As daunting as that may sound, you rarely feel out of control of the events on screen. You won't make every jump and sometimes the Loco won't go down the hole you want it to, but that is always down to you not titling in the right way, and as aggrieved as you might feel after a mistake is made, the game is easy to forgive.

LocoRoco is built with replay value in mind. Each level has three little waving fellows to collect called MuiMui along with a number of flies to find. Of course, there are 20 flowers dotted around each level too and each one that is gobbled up will make your LocoRoco bigger. Once your Loco contains more than one blob it can be split up and reformed to fit through various sized gaps and the splitting animation will have you in stitches the first few times.

Finding all of these collectibles on your first try is nigh on impossible and replaying levels will be essential if you want to complete the game fully. Most of the levels are a moderate size, however, and you won't need to spend hours of your life traipsing back through them. The learning curve is just right and you'll find yourself starting to recognise where the entrances to secret areas might lie.

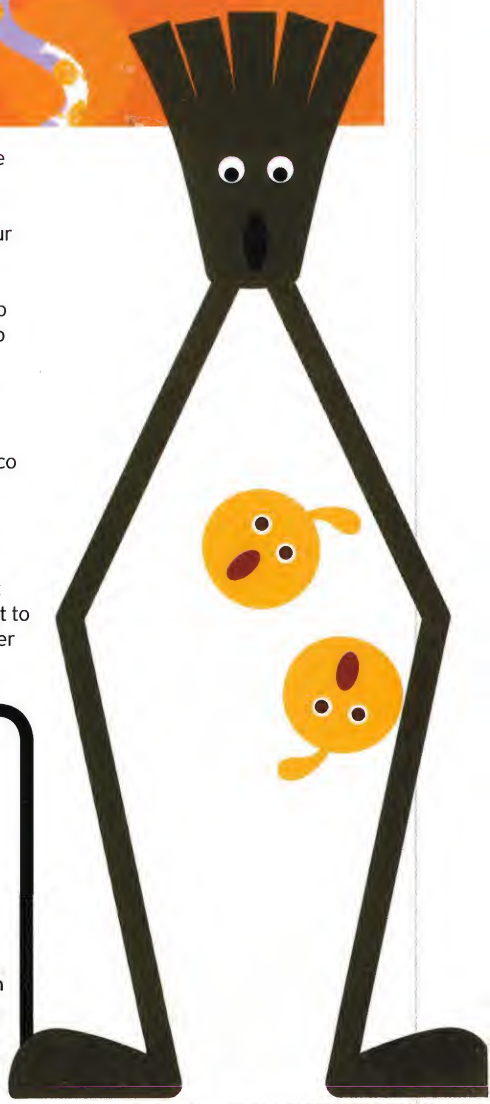
As you go through the level you will encounter increasingly strange friends and foes. The Unfu-ku will gobble your LocoRoco up – bad! But then spit them out in a different shape – awesome! This metamorphosis is essential for the solving of some puzzles, but it also provides some brilliant comedy moments as you attempt to control the new shape. Many other creatures like the Musukusu and

[A game that really deserves all the attention it gets]

Promoting world peace

All the colours of the rainbow

As you can see from the screenshots scattered around these pages, there are several other coloured LocoRocos besides the yellow ones you're all familiar with. Blue, red, black, green and pink ones also exist and as you progress through the game you will get to control them all. While they aren't physically different, they do speak different languages and although still indecipherable to us, we're sure one sounded like French and another German. All these Loco get along despite the language barrier and skin colour, so perhaps we could learn something from them. *LocoRoco* – not only a cracking puzzler, but a political message too.



If you have the required number of LocoRoco then they will serenade the chosen creature to wake them from their slumber

That little speck is your LocoRoco plummeting into the mouth of a waiting frog. Why? Who knows?

Mojya are simply out to take your precious Locos by literally sucking or ripping them out of your blob. Spikes will also hurt the LocoRoco and you'll lose one Loco if you hit some. That Loco isn't necessarily lost though and you can grab it as the poor injured lamb jumps around - in much the same way that Sonic can grab some of his rings after being injured.

The idea behind collecting the MuiMui is to unlock all 144 parts for your Loco House, which is an amusing distraction and allows you to create a small arena for AI-controlled LocoRocos to explore. It's a strange little addition that you will either look at briefly then ignore or spend hours of your life tinkering with, depending on your persuasion. The flies you collect are used as currency when you want to play one of the three mini-games on offer, as each go will cost a number of flies from your total. In turn, these mini-games offer more rewards, mainly in the form of more Loco House parts. Apart from the two demos that can also be selected that's as far as the extras go, but when the main game is this addictive, the demos really don't matter.

There are no multi-player games, although we're not really sure how they would work so it's not a big loss. GameShare is available for the aforementioned demos, so any non-believing friends you might have can sample the delights of *LocoRoco*.

Just like we were, anyone who tries *LocoRoco* will be immediately smitten. If they're not and even dare to say that it's crap, then they quite clearly have a cold black heart made of coal and deserve to live in misery for the rest of their days. Some of you may be disillusioned by the hype surrounding this game, but for once this is a game that really deserves the attention it gets. No, it doesn't allow you to pimp anything, there aren't any guns and no buxom ladies, but *LocoRoco* shows that you don't need any of those things to make a truly brilliant game. If you lot don't put this at the top of the charts we'll be very disappointed. ■

Simon Griffin

[Anyone who tries LocoRoco will be immediately smitten]

Wonderful and addictive - an essential purchase **95%**

The opening movie is short and sweet in its explanation of what's going on

Obviously we normally find everything, but we rushed through it to get screenshots

"Well priced and incredibly functional"
PLAY

To discover our full range of PSP™ accessories visit
www.joytech.net

GIVE YOUR WRISTS A REST

V4: Rise of the mini machines

MICRO MACHINES V4

OUT: 30 JUNE

Publisher **Codemasters** / Developer **Supersonic Software** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player, GameShare**

THE Big QUESTIONS

This looks quite a lot like *Mashed*, is it?
Well it's from the same development team and yeah there are certainly similarities, but let's not forget that *Mashed* took its cues from the original *Micro Machines* games. Confused? Have a lie down and come back to us.

Is there anything new here?
We hate to use a word like depth when it comes to *Micro Machines*, but if pushed we'd say it's, er, deeper. With over 750 cars, 25 vehicle types, 12 new power-ups and umpteen tracks, *V4* offers more than any other *MM* game.

If ever we needed proof that the power of nostalgia knows no bounds, then its worth examining society's recent preoccupation with the 1980s. Despite the majority of people spending the entire decade in a state of near permanent apathy when it comes to going forward, we can't wait to go back.

Forgotten is Thatcher and years of civil unrest and embraced is the *A-Team*, Duran Duran and those Hot Rods known as Micro Machines. In Go>Play's toy box, wedged under Megatron's arse, was our collection of cars, trucks, boats and even *Star Wars* Micros, but it wasn't until the Nineties that we got to control them on our consoles, a gaming experience that evokes a very different sense of nostalgia. There can't be too many (what shall we say?) mature gamers out there that can't remember being huddled in front of their Mega Drive with a few mates trying to out-fox, out-muscle and above all out-race the spotty kid sat next to them.

A good few years on and *Micro Machines* is back to create gaming gold for a whole new generation on a whole new format. Much has changed in the world since the last instalment of *Micro Machines*, but not much has changed in the game world resulting in both good and bad elements. So let's get off the starting line with the good. *Micro Machines* has lost none of its multi-player appeal, in fact, *V4* is one of the most entertaining, enjoyable and imaginative experiences we've ever had on the PSP. Race against human competition and the sense of tension and excitement is almost tangible as the superb handling and interactive courses really help to sort the boys from the bottlers. The aspect that really helps to sell the experience is that every single human racer is on an even playing field or an even kitchen work surface, flower garden or roof top shall we say. They have just as much chance of spiralling off the table top, getting stuck behind a plant pot or being crushed by a rogue billiard ball as you, ensuring that each race is always full of incident.

> [The sense of **tension and excitement** is almost tangible]

Nevertheless, the chances of having four mates, with four PSPs and four copies of the game are slim, so much of your time will be spent playing the single-player

Some AI opponents make races more a test of patience than a fun tear around the track

Drive too close to the hob and you'll get Hot Wheels rather than Micro Machines

mode, which – while still fun and addictive – lacks some of the multi-player's soul. The career mode offers what you'd expect from a racing game, a selection of race types and courses starting off relatively easy and then growing increasingly more difficult as you climb the ladder. We say 'relatively' easy because in *V4*'s single-player you are denied the equal playing field and are given AI racers that are infuriatingly competent, often battling out between themselves while you're left bringing up the rear (why do we always titter like a school girl when writing that phrase?) and trying to salvage some shred of dignity. Seriously, every track must be raced again and again until you've mastered every twist and turn before you can even think about picking up a win and that's fine – we like a challenge after all. However, try doing it four or five times in a row just to progress to the next track where you have to start all over again...

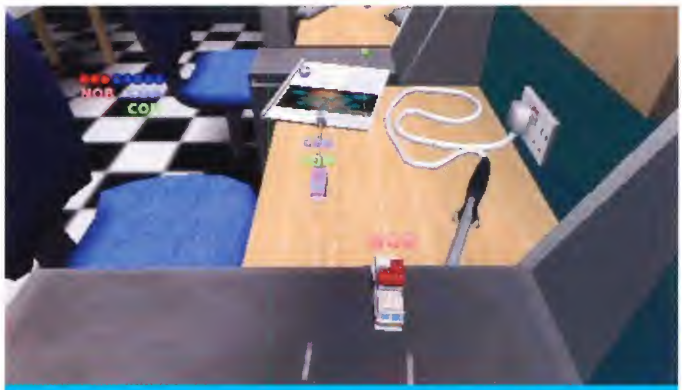
Frustrations aside, *V4*'s redeeming factor is its wealth of variety, offering a decent selection of straight GP multi-lap races, time trials and checkpoint-based dashes in numerous different locations. There's a great choice of outdoor levels this time around too and the alternative surfaces really affect your racing, forcing you to adjust your style or swap your car. There's certainly no shortage of models to choose from, over 750 in fact, and you unlock a handful of new machines every time you emerge victorious. The cars have different qualities including acceleration and grip that may need to be factored in when you change locales. We often went back to our garage mid-race to swap our mini machine – whether it made much of a difference or not is debatable, but the substitution process made us feel like we were making a proactive move to win. When those wins do come, the buzz from achieving the near impossible is unparalleled, but sadly, due to the misjudged difficulty level, that buzz may not come often enough for some players. ■ **Keith Hennessey**

Despite some single-player issues, this is Micro magic **80%**

Hit squad

Road rage has never been so appealing

A big part of *V4*'s appeal is the range of tasty weapons you can utilise during almost every race. From machine guns and electric shocks to Sonic Booms and gigantic hammers, each weapon affects your opponent in different ways. Some weapons drain health making your opponents slower, while others can be used to charge them off the track causing them to drop to their doom. That said, because the races run at such a hectic pace, it's not always easy to get a direct shot at your adversaries – our advice is to go charging into a pack of cars and unleash the beast, as this usually yields the desired results.



Be sure to fire those weapons off quickly as you don't want them slowing you down

My mate. Your mate. Primate

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Sega** / Developer **Traveller's Tales** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE Big QUESTIONS

Wow, is it really that tough?
Yup. Even those mad original *Monkey Ball* skills you're sure to have aren't going to save you this time.

But it's still as much fun as before, right?
It's all a little more frustrating but there are certainly plenty of chuckles to be had.

It's an unwritten rule in videogames that well-known characters should stick to the genre for which they are created. This rule came into existence when developers started to think that it would be a fine idea to see icons such as Bomberman driving around in a go-kart and that people would grow to love their new, twisted project just because of the big name involved. It's just plain wrong. Of course, there are some exceptions, a rare few that have actually bent/broken the rule and still managed to come out smiling. Mustached pipe-mender, Mario, seems to be able to dabble in nearly every activity known to man without making too many bad moves and his swelling fanbase seems to approve even when a hiccup is made – some people can do now wrong, eh?

As previously pointed out though, others can. Not only that, but they frequently do. So when word reached our ears that Sega's *Monkey Ball* franchise was to venture away from the puzzle/party genre and have a stab at platforming, we were a little concerned. *Monkey Ball* is a franchise that we hold very dear to our hearts. Every progression to date has managed to improve the classic formula and many a long hour has been spent by the team here attempting to nail that pesky E string on the guitar stage. We really can't sing the series' praises enough. But to find out that this change was happening, and to also

Of all the collectibles we've encountered in our game-filled lives, bananas are the most fun to gather. Fact

Sure, it looks colourful and friendly, but just you wait and see how difficult it is...

We remember the days when we liked monkeys. Those days will come back...

The multi-player fun is as...er...fun as it ever was

find out that Sega was outsourcing the franchise for the first time ever to another development studio, namely Traveller's Tales, the folks behind the *LEGO Star Wars* titles and the recent *Narnia* game, well... you have to be a little worried about what's going to surface.

[A colourful kingdom of monkeys that **live inside plastic balls...**]

Well as you'd expect the title is adorable. We say this not because our love for monkeys has now grown into an all-consuming force, but because it simply is. Rather than the 'trays' in which previous *Monkey Ball* titles have been set you are faced with a whole kingdom. A kingdom of monkeys. A colourful kingdom of monkeys that live inside mostly unbalanced plastic balls for no reason whatsoever. We want to live there too, but we can't. The best we can do is play *Monkey Ball Adventure* – this is also the closest you will ever come to inhabiting such a realm.

To start, it has to be said, that despite the fears of the genre-switch, *Monkey Ball Adventure* does a very good job and has made the transition well. It was actually only while playing that it became apparent that the two genres involved in the series' progression don't actually differ on too many levels. Rather than a simple/not-so simple/near impossible 'tray' puzzle, you have a sprawling land to explore; rather than one goal to reach, you have a host of characters who are in need of your help. Rather than bananas, there are bananas. It's all very similar, but the obvious difference is that you're in control of a monkey in a ball rather than the environment – something that you get used to very quickly thankfully.

That's about it really. In order to progress through the game you have to travel around, find tasks, opt to take part in what ever form of aid is being requested by what ever thing is in need. You continue in this pattern until you have conquered each of the five hub worlds and have become the greatest monkey that you can possibly be. Simple. Oh, did we say 'simple'?

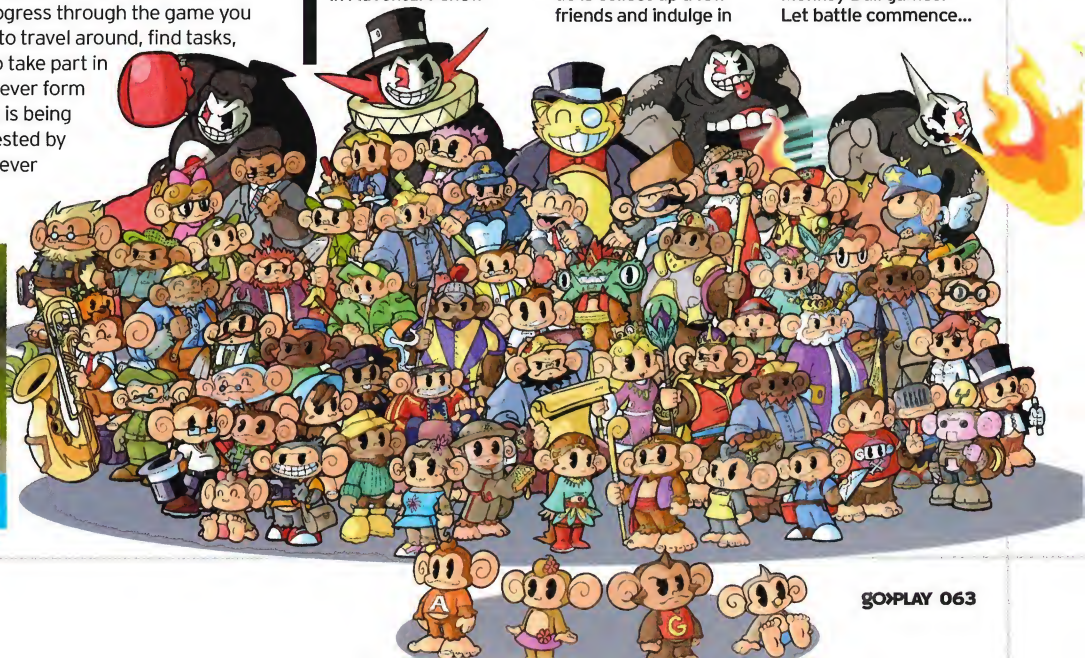
Really, the word 'simple' should never have been typed. Let's call it a typo for argument's sake. What was meant was 'extraordinarily, unbelievably and, at times, hilariously difficult'. This game is hard. For all its cute exterior and

Friends reunited

Because playing alone is a bit boring sometimes...

A large part of the *Monkey Ball* experience is having the chance to play with friends and the multi-player options in *Adventure* show that Traveller's Tales didn't want to buck the trend this time around. When you do tire of the single-player campaign, all you need do is collect up a few friends and indulge in one of the mini-games that are on offer. In fact, you'll probably recognise a fair few of them if you've played any of the previous *Monkey Ball* games. Let battle commence...

One... Two... Three... MONKEY!



bubbly, smiling monkeys, there is some form of demon dwelling inside the title. A demon that will surely devour us all. We HATE that demon. It made us play one particular chunk of level seven times. SEVEN! Now we're not soft gamers really. Well-known 'tough games' such as *Amplitude*, *Devil May Cry 3* and *killer7* have all been conquered by us in a respectable amount of time. We are all skilled, patient and persistent gamers. We do have limits though...

[For all its cute exterior, there's a demon dwelling inside the title]

Picture it... It's a sunny day in the Monkey Kingdom and you're a Monkey in a ball. In order to gain access to another part of the land and help out a fellow Monkey Kingdomer, you need to help him collect up his lost bees. 'Fair enough,' you think and you scan the immediate area, looking for a sign of the first batch of bees. As is true in most games of this type, the start of the mission is a short distance from where the mission is received

Old School

It pays to tray

Monkey Ball wouldn't be *Monkey Ball* if a bit of the classic 'tray'-based action wasn't included. Tucked away inside *Adventure* are 50 of the original 'tray' puzzles to keep you occupied. We'll warn you though, these are some of the tougher ones that could have been picked, so we hope you remember how you conquered them the first time. To make it even more difficult, you'll occasionally stumble across these 'trays' mid-game, so that's a surprise you can look forward to.

This actually looks far harder than it is. Although, it is still really hard. Go figure

Break the castle, win the thing. We've all played these games before but they're all still quite fun

and a swarm of the aforementioned bees is just ahead. 'Yeah,' you cry as the first swarm is added to your ball. 'Now, where's the next?' It's above you, on a bouncy flower. We now call them Bouncy Flowers Of Death. To collect up the remaining bees you need to bounce on 15 of these flowers in a row with no room for error – a task that is as close to undoable as you could ever hope. One slip and you're dead and at the bottom again. You slip lots. The worst bit, this is about the third thing you do in the game. Traveller's Tales, what were you thinking? Children are going to be weeping themselves to sleep. In a cold corner rather than a bed, most likely.

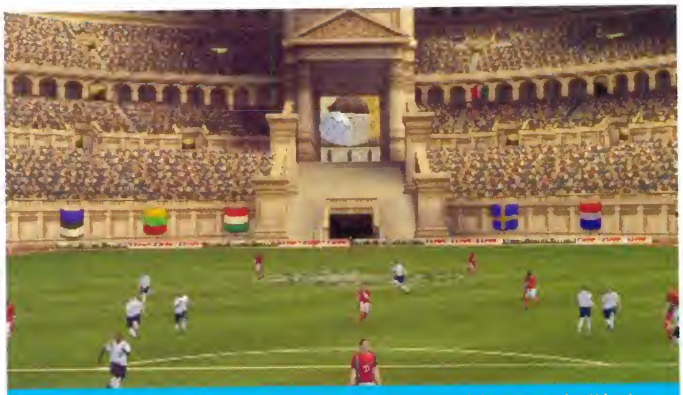
This difficulty doesn't let up, which is largely to do with control. We all know that the PSP 'stick' isn't the most useful control mechanism in existence, but we know it can do better than this. Tricky, yet ingenious, level design is also partly to blame, but the combination of the two leaves you with enamel peeling from your teeth with frustration. True, with practice, the game becomes a little more mellow and revisiting the beginning of the game once you are a fair way through proves that it wasn't actually as difficult as you first made it out to be, but even with the difficulty of the others in the series taken into account, this is a little harsh.

No, for all its charm and appeal, *Monkey Ball Adventure* is perhaps slightly too difficult for your average player. Most will get frustrated, which is a shame as there is a great, solid title hidden here and it's really only extended play that actually reveals this. Thanks to the amount of content and extras available this is still worth a purchase, but with the main game so unforgiving it won't be long before you are craving some original *Monkey Ball* action and turn your attentions to one of the other titles that break you in that little bit more gently. ■ **Rick Porter**

Frustrating, but still manages to be quite fun **78%**

We guarantee that this game is going to make small children cry

It's a lesser known fact that monkeys were actually created to do this sort of thing



It's Go>Play's inaugural 'spot the ball 'competition. There it is, the massive thing in the middle of the picture. You lose!

This is the All Rounder, requiring you to pass the ball to each player before you can take a shot on goal. Looks a lot like normal footy to us

A different brand of portable football...

WORLD TOUR SOCCER 2

OUT: NOW

Publisher **SCEE** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN, Wi-Fi Internet Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Is the England squad up to date? It's not far off. Theo Walcott hasn't made it, nor has Aaron Lennon, but everyone else is present and correct. Although they all look exactly the same as each other.

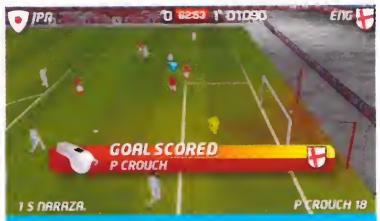
Is there any reason to own this if I have *WTSI*? Probably not. It's a very good game in its own right, but the match engine is just too similar to its predecessor's to warrant owning both titles.

The PSP is still searching for its perfect football game. *Pro Evo* was a poor, although still enjoyable, imitation of its PS2 brother. The latest *FIFA* is certainly a step in the right direction, but is plagued by too many technical issues to be considered great. So, will the imaginatively titled sequel to last year's *World Tour Soccer* rise to the challenge and claim the PSP's footballing throne as its own? Well, the short answer is... no.

Considering the general straightness of its predecessor's lace, *World Tour Soccer 2* has come as quite a surprise. It is genuinely different to every other football game on the market. Last year's edition included a challenge mode – similar in many aspects to scenarios that have cropped up in various football games over the years – and proved to be a diverting distraction. *World Tour Soccer 2*, on the other hand, is ONLY a challenge mode. Okay, so there is an exhibition mode in there for multi-player, but that's it. No leagues. No World Cups. And absolutely no 'master league' equivalent. It's a truly odd decision indeed, but not a terrible one. *World Tour Soccer 2* has learned to not take itself too seriously, and has reaped the benefits. In essence, it's almost identical to last year's game on the pitch itself. Fast, ugly, incredibly easy to play, and crucially, fun. It's like the Peter Crouch of football games. You shouldn't like it, it looks weird, but when it gets out on the pitch you can't help but be entertained. It's all about thrilling dribbles, quick-and-slick passing moves and ambitious shots. Defending is simple, there's rarely a misplaced pass and you can score some truly remarkable goals. Dare we say the true *Sensible Soccer* for 2006? It's not as unbelievable a claim as it may sound.

It's this immediacy, this focus on attractive and entertaining play, that has fuelled the decision to make *World Tour Soccer 2* a challenge-based football sim. It suits the match engine and portable play. Most of the single-player is spent on the two main modes – Medal – a series of

Everybody in *World Tour Soccer 2* looks like Marc Overmars. True story



Crouchy's scored - cue the robot

When Henry gets in a position like that, there's only ever one result

Despite being a little old and lacking a little bit of pace, Zidane can still tear apart opposition defences with his smelly French feet

progressively difficult challenges, and World Tour – also a series of progressively difficult challenges. Over different continents. That's what makes it 'World'.

These 'challenges' are fairly simple affairs, and award skilful play with points. There's classic challenge, which asks for nothing more from the player than attractive football; 'in the zone', which rewards attractive play in certain areas of the pitch; another challenge requires you to pass to every player on your team (including the 'keeper) before a goal can be scored and another that sees your team reduced to nine men... it's not exactly taxing stuff, but entertaining nevertheless. Throw in challenges that ask you to battle against the clock, real player names for 71 countries (an admirable feat) and a neat 'click for heavy touch, hold for light' use of the right shoulder button, and that's about the whole *WTS2* package.

There's absolutely no disputing that Sony's footballing effort is great fun. Anyone can get to grips with it within minutes, and hearing the enthusiastic commentator scream LAMPARD as you smash one towards the top corner is tremendous. However, *World Tour Soccer 2* is far from faultless. For starters, the animation is truly terrible. Players dribble, somehow, with the ball under their legs, the referees are far too card happy and the whole thing is incredibly easy. And when it comes to actually delivering a convincing recreation of association football, the game is about ten light years behind *Pro Evo*.

This is something the developers clearly realised anyway – hence the comic presentation, hence the challenges, hence the hilarious dive button that makes two-player encounters even more enjoyable. This is football for fun, unashamedly entertaining and completely without pretence. *World Tour Soccer 2* is perfect fare for anyone disillusioned with *Pro Evo*, anyone only wanting a casual football fix, or anyone just interested in scoring beautiful goals. It complements Konami's game well, and while it's not as accomplished, it's still a fine PSP sports title. A pleasant surprise. ■ **Jon Denton**

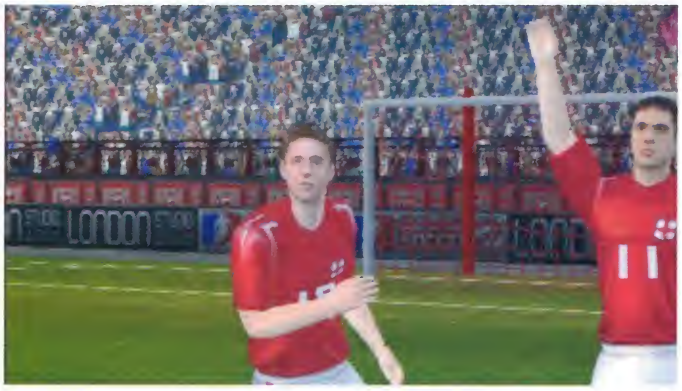
[Thrilling dribbles, quick-and-slick passing moves, ambitious shots]

Rough, unattractive but thoroughly entertaining **74%**

Rising up

WTS is all about the challenge...

Just like the recent Eric Cantona 'Joga Bonita' adverts, *WTS* is all about skilful play. Even in the standard 'Classic Challenge' mode, which is essentially just a normal match, points are awarded for every slick pass or clever flick, and are duly deducted for a mistimed tackle, or giving the ball away. It encourages you to play beautiful football, and not just grind out results Chelsea style. Other challenges may reward you for concentrating play on the left wing and utilising long range shots, for example, so you'll need to have many strings to your bow if you are to be successful in *World Tour Soccer 2*.



Call up contacts and organise races, or hang up when they answer

The game handily tells you which driver needs ramming into the wall

THQ squeezes more out of the franchise

JUICED: ELIMINATOR

OUT: NOW

Publisher **THQ** / Developer **Juice Games** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-6** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player, GameShare**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

What Multi-player modes are on offer?
Most of the main race modes are available to play wirelessly with five other players. Multi-player isn't bad but it's not the best racing game you can play with mates. GameSharing multi-player is also available but the options are somewhat limited.

The graphics aren't really all that special though are they?
It's true that *Juiced* isn't the best-looking racer on PSP, but that does allow the game to move along at a pretty decent pace unlike other more sluggish racing games. It also helps to keep the load times to a reasonable length.

If you're like us then you're probably sick of all these blinged-up, pimp your ride, street racing games. Since *The Fast And The Furious* hit cinemas back in 2001, it seems that every other racing game has the ability to mod your vehicle to the sound of Hip Hop. While the games have been of a reasonable quality, we're just a little bit tired of doing the same thing over and over with slight variations each time.

For that reason, *Juiced* didn't exactly fill us with joy when it arrived in the office but naturally, we popped it into our PSP and gave it the benefit of the doubt. What we found was that while *Juiced* shares many similarities with *Midnight Club* and *Need For Speed*, there's still a solid game underneath that does provide some enjoyment if tricking out your ride is something that floats your boat. When compared to Rockstar and EA's efforts there's a definite lack of sheen in *Juiced*, but that isn't necessarily a bad thing. While *Midnight Club* looked gorgeous, it suffered from ludicrously long loading times that really sucked the fun out of the whole experience. *Need For Speed* on the other hand sometimes feels slightly sluggish, which is not what you want from a racing title.

Juiced outperforms both of these titles in both of these areas. It has bearable loading times and a pleasing rapid framerate that manages to keep the action moving at a decent speed.

However, this all means nothing if the gameplay can't keep up. Fortunately *Juiced* doesn't have too many problems in that area. Despite not being overly original, the racing is actually pretty good fun if sometimes a little twitchy, though this is usually down to the choice of car rather than the controls. The tracks aren't very exciting and don't provide the neon-lit vistas that the competitors do, but they do the job.

The main thing that sets *Juiced* apart from the competitors is the Respect system, which makes up the basis of the career mode. As you progress through the various races you gain or lose the respect of rival crews. The more the crews respect you the more you can interact with

Some crews will like you and shower you with respect, while others will do nothing but diss your rides and driving style

them. This includes hosting races on their turf and challenging them to pink slip races. These pink slip races are the fastest way to build up your garage but not all the drivers are walkovers and there's a fair chance you'll lose your beloved ride – annoying if you've spent ages pimping it. However, you'll only have yourself to blame.

The tricking out of vehicles obviously plays an important part, but there isn't as much emphasis put on it as there is in similar titles. While you can still add decals, vinyls and change body parts, the selection is somewhat limited and the customisation isn't particularly in-depth. For example, *Need For Speed* allows you to place vinyls where you like but *Juiced* places them for you automatically. While this doesn't particularly bother us, some may lament the lack of the ability to really personalise your vehicle. That said, when it's possible to lose your ride in a couple of short laps then perhaps it's for the best if you can't spend too much time fiddling with the look. One irritating thing about the pink slip races though, is that opponents never seem to use the cars they've previously won from you so it seems there's no way of getting them back and once they're gone, they're gone.

There are plenty of other race modes if you don't fancy putting your car on the line, but it's all pretty standard stuff except, perhaps, for the Showoff mode, which simply requires you to do various spins and donuts to rack up the points and impress the crowds. This is sometimes frustratingly difficult, although once again, much of it comes down to the choice of car. This is the great thing about *Juiced*. It's not just about taking a car, putting all the most expensive parts in it and hoping for the best. You're encouraged to build up a collection of cars until you have one for every eventuality should you need something that handles particularly well or one that has good acceleration or whatever.

Juiced isn't perfect, but for what could have been simply another generic pimping sim it delivers something with a little more depth. Not much, mind. ■ **Simon Griffin**

[Despite not being overly original the racing is actually good fun]

Good but nothing that we haven't seen before **77%**

The Workshop will tell you exactly how your car is upgraded

Busta

Break my ride

In an interesting addition, it's possible to damage various parts of your car during races. Crash too much and your neons will break, which isn't too much of a problem. However, when you get nitrous leaks, turbo damage and steering problems, careful driving seems like a much better idea. While this is an interesting feature, the same damage happens in the same order in every race, which rapidly leaves it feeling rather stale. It also gets rather frustrating when you're rammed by an opponent or just scrape the wall yet still incur damage. Causing damage to other drives will also cause a decline in respect, which is fair enough, but if they ram you somehow it's still seen as your fault – most annoying.

The blurry effect gives a nice sensation of speed, if only that happened in real life, it might make the M25 more interesting

A true guilty pleasure...

GUILTY GEAR XX #RELOAD

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Sega** / Developer **Arc System Works** / Price **$45 (Import)** / Players **1-2** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

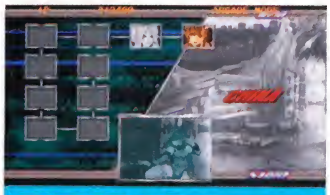
What character should I use?
Eddie. Definitely Eddie. *Guilty Gear* is very well balanced, but the testers seemed to neglect Eddie for some reason, who is strangely overpowered in this incarnation of *Guilty Gear*.

Who should I avoid? Who's cheap?
Chip Zanuff. He's fast but he takes damage like a testicle and can't really land any strong hits himself. Sol Badguy is the cheapest character by far. Pick him and get no respect whatsoever.

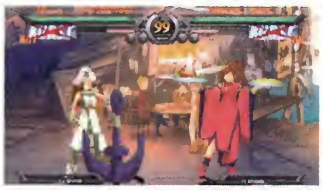
PSP Myth #52: Fighting games are impossible to play on the D-pad. A myth that has probably been circulated by some cheeky executives in Capcom's offices, where they looked at the PSP's pad, looked at each other, then said "nah" and churned out *Darkstalkers* and *Street Fighter Alpha 3* without tailoring those games to the PSP's wonky D-pad. Sure, *Alpha 3* came with an adhesive pad, but only if you lived in Japan and only if you didn't mind having the world's ugliest piece of plastic permanently attached to the world's sexiest piece of hardware. It really was a classic case of beauty and the beast with thumbs crying out in pain and *Street Fighter* fans crying in shame as they rained down missed combo after missed combo.

The myth has been quelled! It's been disproved! The myth-slayer in question is *Guilty Gear XX #Reload* – proof that fighting games can and do work on the PSP's D-pad. Everything just works. Our friends at Capcom are probably besides themselves, sticking their fingers in their ears and pretending it never happened. We don't know what medieval hocus pocus is going on underneath the PSP's greasy D-Pad that makes fireballs register as fireballs and everything else but it just... does. Maybe there's some leniency that's been added to the programming code. Maybe Arc System Works has found the 'make everything work' button that Capcom missed. Maybe it helps that *Guilty Gear* is a fairly lenient game anyway, based on quick thinking and reactions rather than technical skills and convoluted combos.

Either way, it works. It also helps that *Guilty Gear* is based on four buttons, rather than *Street Fighter Alpha 3*'s six. Sure, there's a fifth 'Dust' button allocated to one of the shoulders, but it doesn't really get called into action all that much, leaving 99 per cent of the action on the easily accessible face buttons. It's also incredibly easy to play, as most combos are simple enough, starting from weak punches but slowly building up to heavy slashes, then ending in a special or super move. Nice and simple and completely unfazed by the fussy



This is the arcade progress screen. Exciting! Erm, wait, no it's not



Instant Death Kills have long been a series trademark. Here, Faust blows up the entire world before crawling out of a makeshift shelter in a nuclear desert. Honest

One of the more important skills in *Guilty Gear* is learning how to manage your Tension Bar - will you spend it on cancels, counter-attacks or the various supers?

layout of the PSP's buttons. The quick translation: it just works. Don't try to understand it. Just accept that it works and move on.

As for the actual game itself, *Guilty Gear* is a fantastic little brawler with far more depth than most people credit it with. Most people say it's little more than a button basher for idiots. Then again, most people say *FIFA* is "okay" and that's clearly wrong as well. This *Reload* incarnation is a wee bit out of date now, as this has been kicking around on the PlayStation2 for a fair few months and the *Guilty Gear Slash* sequel is already out on consoles in Japan. Still, it's a bit like milk that smells funny but tastes okay, or at least tastes good enough for you to not bother checking the sell-by date a second time - *Guilty Gear Reload* doesn't look old, doesn't sound old and it certainly doesn't feel old. It's a surprisingly deep game that belies its lazy 'button basher' tag. The depth comes from the way you use the Tension meter, at the bottom of the screen. It fills up as you attack and block and can be used for super move and counter-attacks. We'd like to see "most people" do that before passing on their insights.

The main use for your Tension bar is for Romantic Cancels, which isn't organizing a date and then bottling it to stay indoors with microwave pizza and not answer your phone ("I was asleep, I've been ill, honest") but cancelling your moves so you can create stupidly long combos. It's tricky but not as tricky as it could have been, given the potential for disaster, as the PSP wasn't designed with fighting games in mind. There are even Instant Kill moves, where you sacrifice all your Tension for the entire round in exchange for a one shot super to kill the other player.

[A fantastic brawler with more depth than most credit it with]

Birthday? Unknown? That's helpful. Tell that to Millia when she's crying over the phone because you forgot to buy her all the flowers in the world as a birthday present

The most famous one-liner from the series: "Heaven or Hell... let's rock!" No one knows what it means, of course, but it sounds cool when you shout it while drunk

Bam! You missed. Oh. And then you get slapped from pillar to post as the other player lays into you and you have no Tension to retaliate. Ouch. Gameplay wise, *Guilty Gear* has plenty going for it. It's fast, it's easy to play, and it isn't hampered by the PSP at all.

It also looks really lovely. "Like an anime come to life!" we'd say if we were being twee and writing for five-year-olds but... well, it does look like an anime come to life. The Chernobyl colours that hurt your eyes, the eccentric design that makes no sense, the hyperactive pace that's hard to keep up with and the squealing rock that assaults your ears are all anime hallmarks and also included in *Reload*.

Unfortunately, the trademark Japanese-widdle-poodle-perm rock has been made really quiet and is relegated to background squeals and grunts, keeping in that annoying tradition with most PSP games. Still, the Japanese-let's-make-insane-characters-and-not-bother-explaining-them traits are still here. Bridget looks like a girl but is actually a boy. The official plot explanation for this is "due to an issue involving twins, the subject was raised as a woman by his family." Right. Not that the plot bothers to explain why Faust, the unhinged psychiatrist, wears a paper bag over his head with only one eye-hole. Nor does it explain why Dizzy, a half-angel, half-something-else, attacks with bubbles, lasers and piranhas. It doesn't actually explain anything. There is a story but it's not very good. Imagine what the story could possibly be. Imagine for a little longer and... hold that thought... there. That's more thought put into the story than Arc System Works put into the story. It's something about evil Gears and activating them but no one is really sure what the story actually is. We suspect that Arc System Works doesn't actually know either. No one does. It's just one of those things.

If you're here for the story, you've got the wrong game. What matters is the fighting itself, the one thing that does make sense and is completely, totally, undeniably

Net gain

It's official: Multi-player is awesome

The multi-player is extremely easy to set up, as your PSP will find up to eight lobbies and do all the footwork for you. As we all know, laziness is good, so your PSP doing something for you while you scratch your arse/pick your nose/stare at girls is good. Second, because the game is so easy to play, finding opposition shouldn't be that hard. The character selection and eccentric design should pull casual players in and then the braindead easy combo system should keep them there. Compared to the technical dryness of *Alpha 3* and the impossible-to-playness of *Darkstalkers*, *Guilty Gear* gets multi-player spot on.

A fighting girl-pirate! Officially the best thing ever. She's only a low tier character in the *Guilty Gear* world, thanks to her unsafe moves and low damage potential, but for style alone May is definitely one of the coolest characters on show

We would say the storylines are great, but frankly, we haven't got a clue what the hell is going on

awesome. The best thing about *Guilty Gear* is how each character plays completely differently, relying on a 'gimmick' to make each one feel like a whole new challenge. Zappa can summon ghosts and spirits to aid him in battle but there's no way of controlling what it actually is you summon, adding a random element to his gameplay. Bridget has his (her? His? Its?) Heavy Slash move replaced by a throw yo-yo move, which can then be called back when he (she? He? It?) presses Heavy Slash again – this allows Bridget to set up all weird and wonderful traps for the other player to avoid. The list of weird gimmicks goes on.

combo characters but only has a pocketful of them to last the match. It makes learning each character a genuinely fresh experience, rather than the palette swaps you see in some fighting games (cough RyuKenAkumaDan cough).

It also has a fantastic extra thanks to the bizarrely named M.O.M. mode. This is a series of missions that start off as gentle introductions to the weird quirks of *Guilty Gear*, such as killing an opponent with no Tension. Pretty soon, the missions escalate, until you're fighting with no Tension, no block, a depleted health bar – all while you're poisoned. If ever there's a mode that embodies the pick up

[If you're here for the story, you've got **the wrong game**]

Chip Zanuff is lightning fast and can teleport around the stage, Potemkin doesn't take any hit stun but can't dash, Venom fills the screen with snooker balls (!) and Johnny throws a coin with his taunt button to

and play ethos of handheld gaming, this is it. It'll make you swear, it'll make you cry but it'll make you glad you took it on the 9.15 to Exeter.

So there you have it then. A fighting game that works on the PSP, just in time for hell to freeze over, pigs to fly, Elvis to leave the building and Charlton to win the Premier League. It's a bigger surprise than anyone could have honestly been expecting and the simple fact that it works immediately elevates it above the other fighting games on the PSP at the moment. Even if you've had your fingers burned and scrunched by the likes of *Darkstalkers*, you shouldn't be at all afraid to jump back in to the fighting arena – *Guilty Gear XX #Reload* will kiss your fingers better. *Tekken*? It's your move. ■ **Ryan King**

Fantastic little brawler that looks good and plays better **89%**

These are just some of the types of warriors available to you

Hey, look, numbers, numbers and even more numbers!

Talkin' 'bout my generation...

GENERATION OF CHAOS

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Nippon Ichi** / Developer **Idea Factory** / Price **£39.99** / Players **1** / Supports **N/A**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Looks a bit boring don't you think?
Yeah, but this is a long term relationship of a game, complete with arguments, fights, cuddles and make-up sex.

Is it a game that suits the PSP then?
Yep, it suits it perfectly. Although unfortunately it'll probably outlive your battery a hundred times.

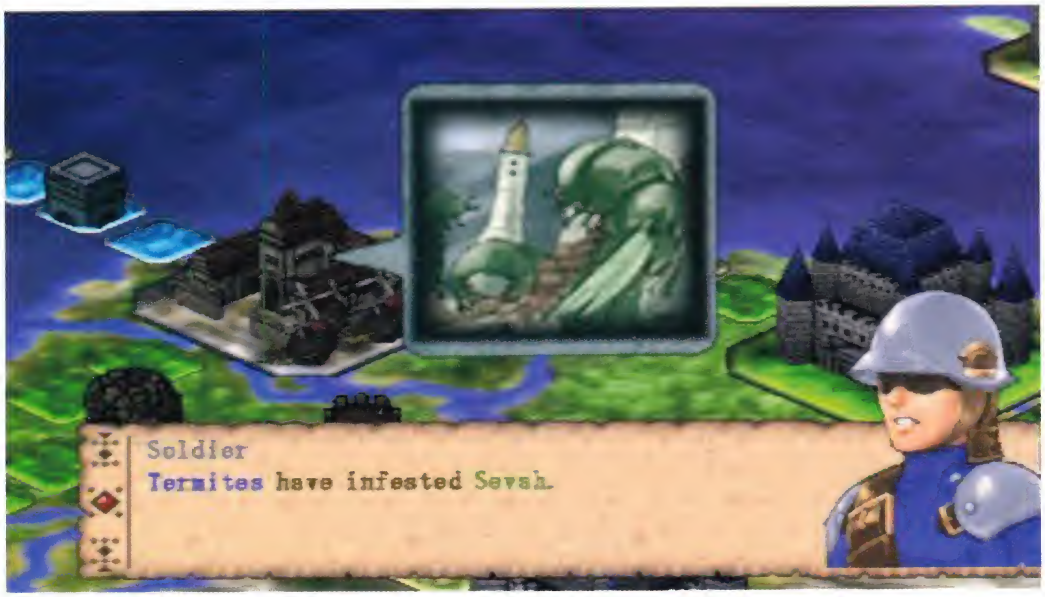
We know a fair bit about games, and you'd be a fool to think that we don't make snap judgments the second we hear about upcoming titles. Of course we always give games the time they deserve, but like every other gamer in the universe, those initial gut reactions are a huge factor in our expectations of a particular game. Normally we love it when a game lives up to those expectations. Every so often though, and we're sure you've had this as well, even when a title ticks all those mental boxes, you're still a little disappointed. *Generation Of Chaos* is one such title which, despite being everything you'd hope and expect from a Nippon Ichi game, just doesn't satisfy in the way we'd like it to.

Why not then? Well it's difficult to pinpoint exactly what makes such a deep, lengthy title so disappointing, as all the facets of a decent turn-based strategy are present and correct, and there's even an element of real-time combat once you get to the battlefield, adding further to the complexity of the game. There's a mammoth selection of options to tinker with and a similar array of character types, each with discernable strengths and weaknesses. Over the course of the campaigns your characters receive some obligatory stat boosts, make some friends and pick up some exciting booty, and the campaigns can be a good deal more balanced than, say *Disgaea* or *Makai Kingdoms*. In many respects, this is the perfect title for the PSP – long, involved and full of character development, but involving more brain than thumb work.

What's obviously missing however, is some kind of tutorial, and whilst the initial missions ease you into the basics quite nicely, the actual meat of the game demands nothing but the utmost understanding of the menus, items and characters. It is, of course possible – and enjoyable to an extent – to work all this out for yourself, but the sheer weight of options means a trial and error approach is nothing more than

More numbers, but from this lot we can glean that he'll be receiving his buttock on a silver platter later

Some *Dragonball Z* characters put in an appearance every now and again. This guy's called Gigolo or something isn't he?



frustrating, especially when one mistake – namely leaving your commander poorly defended – equals pretty much certain death along with a crappy game-over screen. Indeed, until you actually try a spell or item you have little idea about the effect, and given the importance of spells, skills and items in the real-time battles, it can leave you more than a little shafted.

Probably the most interesting novelty of *Generation Of Chaos* is the real-time battles, and whilst you don't have direct control over the sprites, your actions as a commander can turn a loss into a win. The trouble is, when you run out of Items and skills, you're left facing insurmountable odds with no option but to sit back and take it. On occasion you're given the choice of running from the battle, but again we're not entirely sure which set of circumstances allow it. At the start of each battle you're given the choice of fighting style, namely crush, wait, defend commander or attack commander, and a series of customisable formations for your troops. A healthy platoon consists of thirty units, but these are gradually depleted as you engage in battle. You can also bolster your company with enemy commanders who will occasionally offer to join your troop, or in most circumstances become your prisoner. The prisoner system is also worthy of note, as it offers the chance to convert, bribe or threaten the enemy into joining your ranks, but again, much of this mechanic is rendered worthless due to the lack of any real help or tutorials.

If you've played a Nippon Ichi strategy before, and expect the same kind of game, you'll probably be disappointed. Not because of any single element, but because it just doesn't seem to gel together like previous titles in the stable. That's not to say it's not a hugely enjoyable game for the right people, but for the average gamer, it demands a little too much. We're not against games leaving you to discover their intricacies, but with something so complex, something has to be given to support the player – at the very least in the early stages and more abstract concepts of the game. *Generations Of Chaos* offers no such support, making it distinctly less involving than it could have been. ■ **Tom Leclerc**

[The perfect title for the PSP – more brain than thumb work]

An intricate title that's full of complex menus. **73%**

These little cut-scenes usually involve someone getting very angry

Places to go, people to meet...

Who you're likely to bump into on your travels

The most prevalent type of bad guy present in *Generation Of Chaos* are the enemy commanders. Each with their own character, and troop types ranging from scythe-wielding cats to birdmen to gremlins, beating these guys can require a fair degree of thought. If you manage to beat these guys down, they don't often go quietly, and you'll have to take them prisoner. This costs money however, so it can be beneficial to try to convert them or execute them. The other type of bad guy is the random legions of killers lurking around the board, ready to strike should you land on the wrong square. Happily though, beat these guys and you'll probably have a new member of the team to boss about.

Quite exactly what a playboy bunny is doing here we'll never know

Just like *Braveheart*. The guy in the middle looks the spit of Mel Gibson

We've got no idea who this guy is, but he pops up all over the place and nags you to do something you really don't want to do. A bit like your girlfriend

A quarter of a century later and...

PAC-MAN WORLD 3

OUT: 2 JUNE

Publisher **Outsource Media** / Developer **Namco** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1-4** / Supports **Wi-Fi LAN Multi-player**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Pac-Man? Surely he must be dead by now?
No, more's the pity we're afraid. But he is only 25-years-old now and you never know, he could get hit by a bus tomorrow!

So it's a derivative, repetitive, annoying platformer that no one really cares about or should even play?
That's right! Do you want a job?

Pac-Man has lost all his charm, if he really had any in the first place. From his initial name change (he was called Puck-Man until it was realised that everyone would scrape a bit off the P on the arcade machine to hilarious results) to the pretty average side-scrolling platformer (released a year before the first *Super Mario Bros* game, surprisingly) and through all his other incarnations on practically every console and computer ever, you'd think that somewhere along the line he would have been in at least one good game. He hasn't. Which brings us right up to now with the PSP port of the PS2 version (released in the US in November last year and in Europe during May this year) of *Pac-Man World 3*.

So what would you expect from Pac-Man's world? It's doubtful that you've played one of his *World* games before, but if you like you can have a guess, or if you prefer you can look at the screenshots, glance at the score and turn the page, perhaps tutting to yourself and rolling your eyes at another 3D platformer. This of course means ALL the usual staples of the rather sad and tired genre: things to collect, more things to collect, bum bounces, spin attacks, a few other things to collect and of course platforms that are really fun to jump to. Ha ha! Only joking! They're not fun to jump to at all.

It starts off quite nicely, in the most twee of ways with Pac-Man celebrating his 25th birthday before being teleported to a dank factory where he is told by Orson (umm apparently he was a baddie in the world of *Pac-Man* but now they're friends, aww) that someone is disrupting the spectral dimension and as a result, angry ghosts are invading the world and only Pac can stop them. Yes, by eating pills so they turn blue and he gains points.

Pac-Man has always been about points. Eating the wee pills gets him points (for more 'pointificating' on points see the boxout), battering

Eat the Cherries for points! Then realise you don't give a damn about points anymore

Once Pac-Man swallows a Power Pill he can eat ghosts, pretty much a given really

Pac-Man can fly! Sort of. He's really just eating more pills. In the air

Here's a monster, Pac can attack like a spac in a mac, or a sack. True fac(t)

the monsters will add more points, collecting all the fruit? Aye – points. And yet, even with all these points it really is rather pointless. Aha! Did you see what we did there? Oh the puns we weave...

Controlling the little yellow testicle with black warty eyes isn't any fun either. He's really twitchy when using the Analogue nub and not twitchy enough when using the D-pad. This obviously makes the jumping from really high platform to even higher platform a rather nerve-shredding experience, as one wrong twitch sees you plummeting to the start of a level, before having to jump all the way to the top again. The camera doesn't make it particularly easy either, because it's always getting stuck on something. Be it a wall or just something on the scenery, whenever you hold down L or R you can only see for a small amount of screen around you before it comes to a frustrating halt. With some careful turning around you might be able to see more, but again one wrong twitch and down you go.

[It starts in the most twee way with Pac-Man's 25th birthday]

If all this generic platformness is bringing you down (God, he even has Sonic's rev up thingy for accelerating really fast) you can force your friends to play some multi-player, although you might have to strap them to a chair first. At least they won't have to buy a copy themselves as they can just leech off you. One mode sees you as Pac-Man and your friends as the ghosts on the maze levels – whoever eats Pac becomes him and then the roles are reversed. Another involves a battle and whenever someone chomps a ghost it gets added to an opponent's maze; play it well enough and some poor sod could end up with eight ghosts in their maze. Fun? No.

It just seems that after so many years and so many tries at making him into an iconic videogame character (rather than just a pizza with a piece missing) there really is no way to make *Pac-Man* cool, or interesting, or fun. He should just be left on the sidelines making cameos in whatever Namco game he can be shoehorned into. ■ **Tim Empey**

Dull and uninspired, Pac has definitely had his day **40%**

Collect these silver anniversary icons and something cool will happen. (Oh sorry, no it won't.)

25-years-young

No wait not 'young' – just really, really old

As a nostalgic look back at the Pac's beginnings, in *Pac-Man World 3* you can open up some maze levels and remember why you stopped playing it years ago. It's just not fun. But people we're more simple back then and were impressed that they were controlling a mouth in a 2D world. The controls are the same but the graphics have changed (a bit) and it's still not any fun. Eat the wee pills, run away from the ghosts until you get a Power Pill and eat the ghosts. Why? For more points! It's that simple, dull and boring.

Not very astonishing at all

ASTONISHIA STORY

OUT: JUNE '06

Publisher **Ubisoft** / Developer **Sonnori Co** / Price **£34.99** / Players **1** / Supports **N/A**

THE Big QUESTIONS

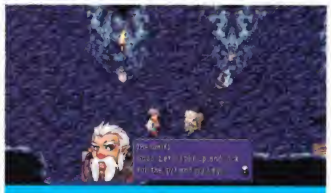
Can more than one character fight at once?
Yes. You have a team of seven at one point, but it just amounts to more people who could potentially die and use up all your healing items.

Is it a hard game to master?
Not really, no. There's always a plot cue in a nearby town, so all you really have to do is knock on doors until you find the cut-scene you're after.

We're so used to 3D in games these days that we rarely spare a thought for the beauty of sprite graphics. 2D can still be beautiful, and indeed it allows for perfection in an artistic style that 3D graphics, in their pursuit of photo-realism, cannot achieve. *Astonishia Story* is the epitome of sprite graphics, with well-drawn Japanese-style characters, exceptionally detailed environments and lovely colourful outdoorsy bits. Its multicoloured pixels look lovely and sharp on the PSP's screen, and even though the graphics are retro, they don't look dated. The gameplay, though, does. This is a very archaic game, so archaic in fact that you wonder if the people who made it have been hiding under a rock for the past ten years of gaming history – until you find out that *Astonishia Story* is actually a remake of a 1994 PC RPG that was released only in Korea. Ah. Now it's all beginning to fall into place.

Astonishia Story is the epic tale of a knight whose convoluted name we can't even remember, embarking on an epic quest to retrieve an epic item belonging to his epic kingdom that was stolen by some epic baddies. For the first few hours of the game our knight is more or less alone, but later on he fights alongside a variety of allies

That little vulture periodically flies over the screen, wherever you are



Most of the game occurs in the forest, although it branches out a bit

She's nearly dead, but she's useless anyway until she gets magic power

Levelling up doesn't seem to do much – you just increase gradually in power throughout the game, regardless of level. No grinding here

You row a boat for about ten seconds! What variety!

from dwarves to wizards to... well, other knights, and that's about it. The game is essentially about progressing from town A to town B triggering story events and fighting in a few simple and intuitive turn-based battles. Still, it looks very pretty all the same.

The battle system is probably the highlight of the action. Characters move on a grid towards each other, like in most turn-based strategy games, and when adjacent to an enemy you can attack it. Limited magic skills and advanced item usage come into play once you get further into the game, but the combat never develops enough to have any real depth. It's simple and inoffensive and at least there are no random battles (except in the sporadic dungeons, of which there are only about five) and enemies are visible as pretty little sprites on the overworld map. Generally you'll only ever have to fight when travelling from town to town trying to find the next story event, although there are a few boss battles in the towns and, naturally, at the end of dungeons.

Lose a battle, though, and it's Game Over; you'll quickly learn to save as often as possible in *Astonishia Story*, if only to avoid having to replay the last tedious 15 minutes of entering buildings in towns trying to find the next story trigger.

The storyline and characters of the game are hugely generic, and the dialogue is rarely exactly sparkling. The game tries to spice things up with some humour, but its jokes about downloading games and warez or about RPGs in general are too self-referential to really be funny. There are some moments of amusing slapstick comedy, though, and the dialogue will occasionally raise a smile. Sadly it's all perfectly translated, so we've been denied all the potential humour that we could have derived from bad Korean-English translations too. This really is an RPG by the numbers – it feels like something from the early Nineties, and there's no evolutionary flair to its plot or mechanic.

For all its traditionality, though, *Astonishia Story* could still satisfy a reasonable person's lust for an RPG. It's not bad, not by any stretch of the imagination – indeed, it's just perfectly inoffensive. You don't even have to think when you're playing it, most of the time – just travel from place to place, upgrade your armour in each new weapon shop, occasionally press X next to some enemies and read through some dialogue text. It can even be quite relaxing. This is the interactive version of a B-movie on TV on a bank holiday afternoon – you probably wouldn't mind watching it for a few hours in the absence of anything else to do, but there's nothing remotely memorable about the experience. When it all ends after about 15 hours (which is perfectly acceptable for a handheld game in our opinion), you'll put it down and move on without ever looking back, if you can be bothered to play through to the end. And as far as pretty sprite graphics on the PSP are concerned, this is among the prettier examples. ■

Keza MacDonald

The word 'serviceable' has rarely been so apt **61%**

[The **epic tale of a knight** whose name we can't even remember]

Splitting up in dark caves – always a good idea

The Korean scene

What else has this developer done?

This is a Korean game from 1994, so we thought we'd do some research and find out what its developer/ Korean publisher Sonnori has been doing since, hoping we'd find something funny. We couldn't find anything at all in English, but a quick visit to the Korean website reveals a weird little tennis/ basketball game called *Love Forty*, featuring flying dogs with bat wings and a demon as well as tennis, and lots of happy little characters dancing around the logo 'Sonnori is Future Fun New You'. Oh, and they also did something called *WhiteDay*, which was a first-person survival horror game with cel-shading graphics and obviously just wouldn't work at all.

OUT: NOW

MICRO MACHINES V4

Publisher: **Codemasters** / Developer: **Supersonic** / Price: **£29.99** / Players: **1-4**

MICRO MACHINES IS bloody brilliant. Bloody brilliant in that it features no blood, but lots of brilliance. Despite walking the tightrope that is 3D, *Micro Machines* is immensely playable.

The gameplay is essentially the same as its 2D original, despite the slight 3D-efying of it all. There are eight varied environments and eight characters and it retains a real charm that few games manage to capture. The result is a fantastic multi-player title that has you laughing along with your opponents, while secretly harbouring a massive - and sinister - desire to beat the hell out of them. The one-player mode is not what this title is about and so, if you are friendless, we wouldn't recommend it. ■ **Luke Smith**

Small but perfectly formed **85%**

OUT: NOW

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE

Publisher: **Sega** / Developer: **Traveller's Tales** / Price: **£29.99** / Players: **1-4**

AREN'T MONKEYS BRILLIANT? Of course they are. They eat termites off each others' backs. Well, most monkeys do; the other monkeys live in balls and take part in 'adventures'.

The monkeys have little choice in entering the adventure-market as there is a monkey war raging. New skills have been introduced to aid your monkeys in their adventure-themed endeavours. You will find they can hover, stick to walls and become invisible. You will also find that the game is difficult. In fact, it's so hard you might find yourself longing to play as a termite-eating monkey. How hard can that be?

If you can bear the difficulty, you'll find it is a charming title with some innovative ideas. There are 50 new puzzle trays to navigate, 5 monkey kingdoms and 50 monkey characters to adopt, which all means that with the difficulty the way it is, there's over ten thousand years of game-time here. Hurrah for monkeys. ■ **Luke Smith**

Good fun, but a little tough for its target market **79%**

You can throw away the break pedal

FLATOUT 2

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Empire** / Developer **Bugbear Entertainment** / Price **£29.99** / Players **1-4 (2-6 online)**

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Similar to the first one, then? Quite, but then that's no bad thing if you like the idea of mashing drivers through windscreens is it?

Any framerate issues, with all that debris? Thankfully not. It obviously benefits from Bugbear's proficiency on the PS2.

FlatOut 2 is bursting at the seams. Bugbear has crammed in a load of new tracks, 36 vehicles, new drivers, new modes, new mini-games... you see where we're going. New things are good and consequently *FlatOut 2* is an improvement on the original. It's no longer just showing off its physics (as if physics were what we were hankering for) and instead, the gameplay feels more fluid and far more exciting. The AI is superior to the original, which is crucial, as you will spend a lot of time driving into the side of your opponents. When you're not doing that you'll probably be driving around destroying other destructible objects. You'll hear noises like bang and wallop. Destructible things are also good and *FlatOut 2* has lots of them. For you to destroy.

Before we forget, it also has a mini-game where you get to project your driver through rings of fire. It's helpfully called 'Ring Of Fire' and it's much more fun than that advert with the kid who doesn't put his seat belt on.

If you want a good arcade racing experience you won't go far wrong here. With a fancy new online feature and the same old throw-your-ragdoll-driver-head-first-into-a-brick-wall, *FlatOut 2* does enough to justify its latest incarnation. It won't be challenging *Burnout* for superiority, but things are looking up for the series. ■ **Luke Smith**

Fast, frenetic, frenzied, and other words beginning with f **73%**

While smashing stuff up is the name of the game, it's probably a good idea to keep all four wheels on the ground for most of the race

FORBIDDEN SIREN 2

Publisher: **Sony** / Developer: **In-house** / Price: **£39.99** / Players: **1**

OOH IT'S SO scary. No really, it is. Even scarier, in fact, than those dreams where you're falling and you never seem to land.

Forbidden Siren 2 has loads of zombies. There are two species of them; two species that impact in scary ways on the gameplay (remember, scary is good here). The Shibito don't like the dark and the Yamibito don't like the light. So you're screwed. Actually you're not, but it's a clever device that demands that you negotiate Yamijima (the scary island) with all the guile of Sherlock Holmes. And before you start thinking 'it sounds easy', let us tell you that the Shibito shop at Millets and carry Mag Lites – or another effective brand of flashlight.

There's other scary stuff like Sight Jacking, where you can see from the zombie's perspective and there's even the chance to see from a dog's perspective; the dog's vision is actually in monochrome.

If you like a good scaring, and you're not a real girl about these things, then we dare you to brave The Island Of Darkness. ■

Luke Smith

Another scary game to play at night with the lights out **89%**

THE DA VINCI CODE

Publisher: **2K Games** / Developer: **The Collective** / Price: **£29.99** / Players: **1**

THE BOOK WAS so popular that nothing will ever seem popular again. The film was pretty popular, thanks to the book. And the game... well the game's not going to be popular at all, thanks to it not being very good.

It's like the book, but in a game. So much so that it really doesn't work. The word puzzles and detective puzzles are good in the book because on the next page somebody else solves them for you. Here, you're on your own. Well, besides the hint button, which is sure to become your very best friend. In between, there are some cumbersome stealthy sections and cut-scenes galore, most of which are amusingly bad. Here's a rare example of a game requiring a whole lot more effort than a book. ■

Luke Smith

Worse than the book and the film **50%**

Grand Theft Auto constantly throws up new and inventive ways to slaughter people - bless its little cotton socks

GRAND THEFT AUTO: LIBERTY CITY STORIES

You probably already own this game

OUT: NOW

Publisher **Rockstar** / Developer **In-house** / Price **£19.99** / Players **1**

THE Big QUESTIONS

What's added to the mix this time? Not a helluva lot, but the formula that makes Rockstar's great franchise is untouched.

Has anything been taken away? Yep – sadly all multi-player aspects have been stripped out of this release.

If you're reading this and don't know what *Liberty City Stories* is, punch yourself in the face. Where the hell have you been? *Liberty City Stories* is the greatest PSP game ever and now it's been ported to the PS2 and it's exactly the same as the original but without the multi-player!

This is a straight port and normally we'd criticise it and say things like 'what's the point' but we're not going to – the reason being that not everybody owns a PSP and everybody deserves to play this game. Of course, what they should do is rush out and buy a PSP, but until they do, they can play this. Admittedly, they won't be able to play the multi-player as the PS2's online capabilities are not particularly capable. So there is no multi-player mode. None at all. Not even a little bit. It's not the end of the world. As you can see, the world is continuing on as if nothing had even happened.

The reason the world continues oblivious is because *Liberty City Stories* provides as good a single-player mode as any game ever. No other game handles such an enormous game world so effectively, providing challenging and colourful missions, which leave you agog at the failures of other 'sandbox' titles. As such, whether this is worthy of a purchase or not comes down to one simple question. Do you own a PSP? If you do you'll own it already, if you don't, get it for your PS2. It's only twenty quid. You really won't get more world for your money anywhere else. ■ **Luke Smith**

Change is scary and wrong, so we still love it **90%**

WIDESCREEN

AARON ASADI CHECKS OUT THE MONTH'S HOTTEST UMD RELEASES...

CONTENTS

Your UMD guide at a glance...

★★★★★	Excellent
★★★★	Must Buy
★★★	Average
★★	Fair
★	Don't Bother

UMDs

[82] Man On Fire
[83] Cruel Intentions
[84] Pink Panther
[85] Big Fish
[86] Hostel
[87] The Princess Bride

MAN ON FIRE

This should come free with Ray-Bans, but it doesn't.

OUT: 14 AUGUST

Director: **Tony Scott** / Starring: **Denzel Washington, Dakota Fanning, Christopher Walken** / Price: **£19.99**

★★★

Some films just make you want to wear sunglasses, and this is one of those. It's loud, it's brash and it's violent. The hero gets shot in the chest without dying and he always looks oh-so-cool when he's wearing his shades. However, *Man On Fire* is absolutely the sort of film you'll forget about almost immediately after watching it – it's popcorn pap in the best and worst sense, an oxymoron that makes it pretty difficult to criticise fairly or wholeheartedly recommend.

The story is as straightforward as action movie aficionados would want it to be. It centres on a bodyguard's young assignment getting kidnapped in the kidnap capital of the world, Mexico City. There are some elements that add the odd layer of complexity, such as the bodyguard's personal attachment to his obligation, his battle with the bottle and the occasional twist here and there, but on the whole this is a revenge flick in the vein of *Point Blank*.

The real test of a revenge movie, or any A-to-B thriller for that matter, is in making the mission itself seem fresh and exciting. A hero bungling about having fisticuffs with one bloke and a shoot-out with the next is hardly the way to keep your testosterone-fuelled audience happy anymore. It needs to be constantly interesting and inventive. Director Tony Scott knows this, and to his credit tries hard to make every scene feel as energetic as he can. A lot of the time this works, with the *True Romance* helmer having our hero stuff bombs up bad guys' arses and chop their fingers off for good measure. It's honestly quite refreshing to root for someone who's so clearly as ruthless as his prey. However, there's a good chunk of the film that just plods along in a miserable by-the-numbers fashion, a fact not helped by a stiff two

How are you earning more money than me? You're only ten!

SHOCK FACT!
Denzel Washington has a permanently dislocated pinky which sticks out at a right angle from the rest of his fingers.

hours-plus running time. Also, you can always tell when a director's desperate for ideas when he makes subtitles jump about like a cartoon.

Fundamentally a hyperactively photographed mishmash of good and bad action cinema, *Man On Fire* needed a strong performance from its lead to drag it into that 'above-average' bracket, and thankfully that's exactly what it got. Despite clearly not being the place to put in such a strong performance, the script demanding nothing more than a run-of-the-mill John McClane impression, Denzel performs admirably as the bodyguard with a heart, injecting each scene with a much-needed believability and yet still maintaining that Lee Marvin-like cool about him. Dakota Fanning is bloody good too come to think of it, but she doesn't look anywhere near as good in sunglasses, so we'll just pay her no more attention. ■

The first part of the trilogy that was never supposed to be one

CRUEL INTENTIONS

After seeing how cool Denzel looked in *Man On Fire*, they just couldn't resist getting their shades out. Not that they needed them, being inside and all...

OUT: 17 JULY

Director: **Roger Kumble** / Starring: **Ryan Phillippe, Sarah Michelle Gellar, Reese Witherspoon** / Price: **£15.99**

★★

Go to your local Blockbuster and have a look through the bargain bin. We've got a fake £20 note that says you will find a copy of *Cruel Intentions 2* and *Cruel Intentions 3* in there going for about 50p each. Now, no doubt you're well aware of the film that spawned these awful sequels and like us are completely at a loss as to how you can have a sequel that doesn't feature any of the same cast. That's another matter for another day though, and right now we have to focus on the original and exactly why you shouldn't bother with it.

Cruel Intentions is the sort of shallow nonsense that cheerleaders across America know word for word. Following the lives of a couple of high school-attending rich bastards played by Sarah Michelle Gellar and Ryan Phillippe, the film's essentially set around the bets and challenges these two make each other that tend to involve sex and other people. Inevitably this silliness leads to one of the two falling in love and the consequences of such a catastrophe. As if you hadn't already guessed, this film is based on the film that was based on the novel *Les Liasions Dangereux* (it's French), although here no attempts are made to ape the quality of either of those two. Instead we have Sarah Michelle Gellar frolicking about on a king-size bed saying things like "you can put it anywhere" but knowing full well that her no-nudity clause will mean nothing of the sort will ever appear on screen. She does kiss Selma Blair though, which is a wonderful substitute for good filmmaking if you're into that sort of thing.

SHOCK FACT!

Ryan Phillippe and Reese Witherspoon met on the set of *Cruel Intentions* and are now happily married with kids and an Oscar. Yay!

The incredibly pretentious nature of the film is actually embodied rather well in Ryan Phillippe's pompous performance, the wooden script crawling out of his mouth with all the liveliness of a dead worm. It's sadly just all too much to bear for an hour and a half, with your mind ultimately wandering to such questions as: how did Reese Witherspoon go from this to Oscar glory again? ■

"I know you think you look good, but this hypnosis thing is just never going to work if you don't take those bloody things off"

5 of the best UMDs on the shelves

[1] FIGHT CLUB

Brilliant black comedy that's as cool as hell. Brad Pitt, as the iconic Tyler Durden, has never been better and Ed Norton has rightly conceded that he will never star in a better film. Trudat.

[2] ROBOCOP

Excellent sci-fi. Super violent and often misunderstood as nothing more than that, which is a shame. Still, so long as you know that this is Verhoeven's best film and one of the best of the decade as well.

[3] A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

The best comic book movie of all time? Probably. Subdued, measured and powerful, Cronenberg's action thriller/family drama will grip you from start to finish and give us an excuse to use loads of clichés! Unmissable.

[4] KILL BILL: VOLUME 1

A terrific martial arts movie from start to end/middle. Doing what he does best, Tarantino somehow turns what is essentially terrible cinema into a thing of excellence. Wonderful choreography and a central performance from Uma Thurman that should have been good enough for three Oscars.

[5] BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN

Well acted, simply told, stunning to look at and with a score that will send shivers through your ears and out your arse, with *Brokeback Mountain*, Ang Lee has created, first and foremost, a film that ticks all the boxes.

That was some curry he'd had last night... after 'letting one go' Steve almost knocked himself out with the stench. Beyonce was certainly glad she wasn't in Jean 's shoes

When will they bloody learn?

PINK PANTHER

OUT: 17 JULY

Director: **Shawn Levy** / Starring: **Steve Martin, Jean Reno, Beyonce Knowles** / Price: **£15.99**

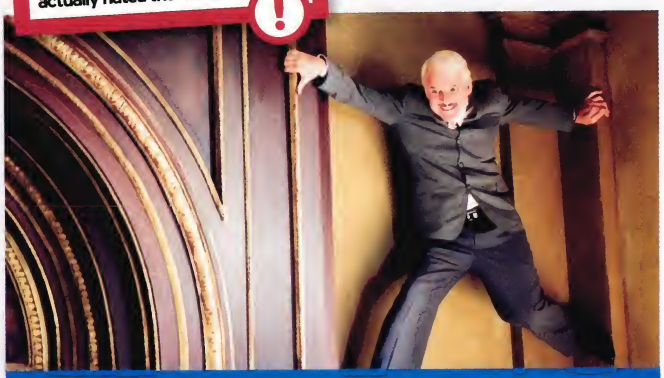
★

Some things in life are really easy to understand and yet a lot of folk fail to comprehend. Take for instance those jeans that some kids wear below their arse. They're absolutely stupid and yet every Saturday you're bound to see hundreds of brats defying science and fashion with their silly clothes. Another more relevant example though, would be the *Pink Panther* movies. It's quite clear that they were only ever funny because of Peter Sellers and yet here we have a *Pink Panther* movie made without him and with Steve Martin. For the last time people: Inspector Clouseau was only funny because Peter Sellers played him. You can't just stick any old goofball in the role and expect it to be the same. It just doesn't work.

The story is typically familiar, the Pink Panther diamond goes missing and somehow the luckless, incompetent French policeman ends up on the case. The plot was never that important to the *Pink Panther* movies though, so we're prepared to let that slide. What we won't forgive is Steve Martin's abysmal attempts at the Clouseau accent, his failure to replicate any of the slapstick successes of the previous films, and the general lack of good comedy. Driving a Smart car just isn't a great gag, and yet this sort of lazy humour fills the film from beginning to end, ignoring why the originals were so popular in the first place. Most of the humour in Seller's *Pink Panther* wasn't merely derived from the pratfalls but crucially from Clouseau's battle for his dignity after such a pratfall. He was a law enforcer struggling desperately to deny his ineffectiveness, but here Clouseau is a man too stupid to engage in such turmoil.

We're not complete ignoramuses though - we're well aware that the original *Panther*s weren't anywhere near as amazing as their star, but this fails even to reach those often overrated standards, and instead just reminds us how big a talent Sellers was. Ultimately this just doesn't ever feel like a *Pink Panther* movie, and sadly, even less like a worthwhile comedy. ■

SHOCK FACT!
Despite playing Inspector Clouseau on many occasions, Peter Sellers actually hated the films.



Trying to get some exercise in during his lunch break seemed like a good idea at first, but now he wished he'd thought it through a bit first

BIG FISH

A film about lying and all the good it can do

OUT: 17 JULY

Director: **Tim Burton** / Starring: **Ewan McGregor, Albert Finney, Billy Crudup** / Price: **£19.99**

★★★

There's an odd demand for sympathy in *Big Fish* that kind of puts your whole experience of the movie out of whack. The story is told by Billy Crudup's character, the grown-up son of the film's hero, played by Ewan McGregor and then Albert Finney. It follows both the life of a young man (McGregor) leaving a small town and getting into all sorts of fantastical adventures and the woes of a young man (Crudup) coming to terms with the fact that his dad (McGregor/Finney) probably hasn't told him a true story since the day he was born. The problem is that Crudup's character is such a grumpy disbelieving sod that you want to slap him around the head and listen to his dad's tales without his melancholy getting in the way. It's not a massive problem as we spend most of the film with McGregor's character anyway, but it's still an annoyance that stops the film from working as well as it could and indeed almost does.

From the giant fish's capture at the start of the film to its genuinely original climax, *Big Fish* is littered with some marvellous scenes, composed with an energy and style that few other directors could muster. It's not long before you're caught up in our young man's world either as he endeavours to leave his small town to find bigger and bolder adventures, meeting giants, fighting wars, working in the circus, and finding the love of his life. Director Tim Burton goes all out to create this whimsical world that you're absolutely desperate to be real, but unfortunately the scenes that take place outside of this realm of fancy feel flat by comparison, perked up only by a tremendous Albert Finney.

Don't you hate those people who pretend they're helping when it's obvious they're not actually doing anything?

Given the excellent effects and charming performances, it's a wonder as to why this isn't a more memorable movie. It certainly has all the ingredients of a classic, and Burton is certainly at home with both the subject matter, but there's just something that doesn't quite work. It might well be our misdirected pathos, or the slightly uneasy juxtaposition of the fantasies and the reality, but even with that accounted for there's still a feeling that something is stopping this from being a real winner. We'll be damned if we want to dwell on that little problem any longer though.

Truth be told we're not that confident that three stars is an accurate score, and certainly after having flirted with the notion of it being a four star movie for so long. When it's good, it's outstanding, and the performances are consistently strong, but unfortunately it just has too many niggles for us to thoroughly recommend it. Maybe on another day we'd have been less strict with the score, but it's supposed to be summer and it's raining so we're in a mood. ■

SHOCK FACT!
Helena Bonham Carter, who plays the town witch in *Big Fish*, is married to Tim Burton. Wowee!!

During a game of Truth or Dare, he strongly regretted taking the forfeit... why didn't he just admit the film was rubbish?

HOSTEL

Real fear is knowing that they might make a sequel

OUT: NOW

Director: Eli Roth / Starring: **Jay Hernandez, Derek Richardson, Eythor Gudjonsson** / Price: **£19.99**

★

Sometimes it's incredibly difficult to sit down and watch a film with an open mind. It's a sad fact, but it's true. You read about the hype surrounding a film for months and months and so when it comes to actually watching it, your preconceptions can ever-so-slightly contort your opinion. Off the back of the fairly decent *Cabin Fever*, director Eli Roth announced that he was going to make Hostel, which was based on an idea Harry Knowles (the fat idiot from **aintitcoolnews.com**) had, which essentially involved a group of young tourists going to a hostel in Europe and getting tortured. During one interview he had at the scriptwriting stage Mr Roth said he basically wrote down the "sickest, most twisted, f*cked up things" he could think of. Now we know that most of the crud that comes out of Hollywood is often as considered as a cough, but the sort of base, uninspired plot *Hostel* reportedly contained was as juvenile and revolting as anything we'd ever heard. Still, professionals that we are, we endeavoured to approach it with as open a mind as possible.

Hostel is as juvenile and revolting as anything we've ever seen. And before you get excited, we don't mean revolting in the gory sense either. Despite the vast column inches dedicated to labelling this as a video-nasty, *Hostel* is as disappointing on the violence front as it is anywhere else. Considering the film involves nothing more than some students visiting Europe looking for sex and finding torture, the film's sex scenes are as tame as those you'd find on Five's Friday night movie, whilst its torture scenes aren't half as graphic as you might have perhaps feared or desired. This is not to say that we wanted a film full of unimaginable sex and a brutal, explicit torture, but when sex and violence are all a film's got going for it, we expect it to be done with at least some verve. The fact that there isn't the slightest bit of originality here just exposes Eli Roth as nothing more than a hack who once held some potential as a B-movie director.

The first half of the film is genuinely as gripping as an episode of *Hollyoaks*, matching some uninteresting actors with some truly terrible dialogue. The first few scenes with the Eastern European temptresses are also embarrassingly put together, feeling more like a cartoon of a teenager's wet dream than anything that could ever feasibly happen. Not much better is the second half that chronicles our trio's capture and violent misfortune. On display is the odd severed leg and chopped finger, but as the context is so lacking in suspense or tension, it's very difficult to feel anything other than complete ambivalence.

Topping off the misery is the film's clear xenophobia, depicting first Amsterdam and then Slovakia as nothing more than seedy, murky places populated with nothing but nymphos and thugs. Worse still is the fact that you have to buy into this perception if you're to get anything out of this appalling film. It's by far and away the most disgusting part of the movie – and we're almost certain that Mr Roth didn't want that to be the case when he sat down to write it. ■

SHOCK FACT!
Eli Roth used over 150 gallons of blood to make this film. An amazing fact and not useless in the slightest!

Proof that fantasy flicks don't have to be based on novels

THE PRINCESS BRIDE

They'd been pretty excited when they heard that an international footballer was in town. They were less excited when they saw Peter Crouch heading their way...

OUT: NOW

Director: **Rob Reiner** / Starring: **Cary Elwes, Robin Wright Penn, Andre The Giant** / Price: **£15.99**

★★★★

"I was eleven years old. And when I was strong enough, I dedicated my life to the study of fencing. So the next time we meet, I will not fail. I will go up to the six-fingered man and say, 'Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die.'" As a kid in the Eighties, lines didn't come much cooler than that. It probably doesn't read particularly well here as we can't do the accent, but rest assured this is one of the many highlights of Rob Reiner's magical tale of love, adventure, revenge and Andre The Giant, of course.

Film scribe extraordinaire William Goldman's script is admittedly the main source for fun in the film, the often-hilarious script enlivening the rather traditional tale. Indeed whilst the story of a kidnapped princess being rescued by a dashing pirate and his newly acquired allies may seem old, the modern slant it's given by Goldman's typewriter makes it feel constantly fresh. Of course, this was much more the case back in 1987 when the film was first released, but even nearly 20 years on the film has withstood the tests of time well enough to remain a charming, funny adventure of derring-do as well as ballsy bravado.

As much a homage to the films of Errol Flynn's era as it is anything else, *The Princess Bride* succeeds where so many have fallen flat on their face. You only need look at the latest *Zorro* movie to see how easy it is to come unstuck trying to make a traditional adventure yarn work, so it's a testament to both Reiner and Goldman's skill that *The Princess Bride* not only avoids disappointment but delivers as much hearty entertainment as any of the films it tries to emulate. Credit must also go to the cast, however, with everyone from Cary Elwes to Peter Falk playing their parts with honest gusto and, perhaps more importantly, a sublime understanding of the film's playful tone.

It's an immensely enjoyable film, and even disregarding the charms of nostalgia, is one that will enhance anyone's fantasy collection. ■

SHOCK FACT!
When Billy Crystal was filming his scenes, director Rob Reiner had to leave the set because he'd laugh too much.

You'd think they'd be happy they'd got some work that didn't involve dressing up as the Three Bears... maybe they missed Goldilocks?

TOP FIVE BEST-SELLERS

[1] BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
Everyone loves good romance.

[2] FINAL FANTASY VII: ADVENT CHILDREN
The non-interactive software proves to be a hit.

[3] THE PRODUCERS
A silly film sells a few. The shame.

[4] NIGHT WATCH
The Russian horror-flick does good business.

[5] KING KONG
The ape fails to climb to the top of the charts.

ALSO RELEASED THIS MONTH

Animal Farm
10 July
George Orwell on PSP. Go figure.

Spider-Man: The Animated Series
10 July
New energetic Spidey adventures.

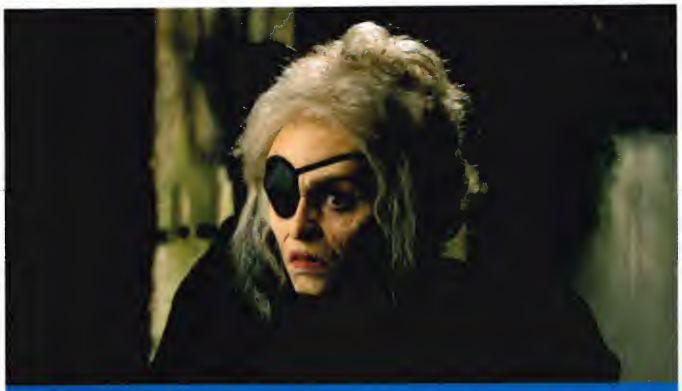
Heathers
17 July
Classic high school black comedy.

Hellraiser II: Hellbound
17 July
Surprisingly decent sequel.

The Bounty
24 July
Mel Gibson on the high seas.

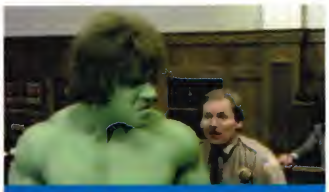
UMD RELEASE LIST

THE DROUGHT CONTINUES AS THE UMD MOVIE RELEASES DRY UP. WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU ALL? GO AND BUY SOME UMDS!



Helena had really let herself go in recent years and had even lost an eye in a make-up incident - the poor lamb

The soldiers of *R-Point* prepare themselves for the next pant-wetting occurrence. Um, maybe someone should tell them guns don't work on ghosts



The Hulk gets even madder as the guard disses his hairdo

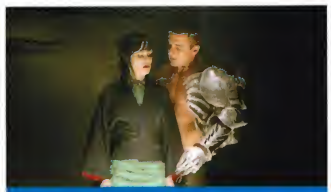
MONDAY 10 JULY

Animal Farm
Born To Boogie: The Motion Picture
Demons: Director's Cut
Demons 2: Director's Cut
Drowning Mona
Kickboxer 3: The Art Of War
Red Dwarf: Smeg Ups
Spider-Man: The New Animated Series

MONDAY 17 JULY

Big Fish
Cruel Intentions
Dirty Sanchez: Series 1 - Front End
Heathers
Hellbound: Hellraiser II
Hellraiser III: Hell On Earth
Initial D: Drift Racer
Kalifornia

Denzel got somewhat annoyed when a thief ran off with his Oscar



Blade Trinity features one of the worst Dracula interpretations ever

Ninja Dragon
Pink Panther
R-Point
Trial Of The Incredible Hulk

MONDAY 24 JULY

The Bounty

MONDAY 14 AUGUST

Man On Fire

MONDAY 2 OCTOBER

Blade Trinity

MONDAY 16 OCT

Warrior King

MONDAY 30 OCT

Tony Jaa Box Set: Ong-Bak/Warrior King

Steve ponders what exactly happened to his once great career and why he decided starring in a *Pink Panther* remake would be a good idea

Bette gets wrecked at the mere thought of a *Pink Panther* remake, but consoles herself with the fact that she wasn't in it

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

CAROL VORDERMAN'S SUDOKU AND A PSP!

AS SUDOKU FEVER continues to grip the nation, Xplosiv bring us a brand new PSP game of the number puzzle, endorsed by none other than Carol Vorderman. A self-confessed Sudoku addict, Carol features heavily in the game and gives tips on how to beat even the toughest puzzles. Xplosiv has kindly provided us with copies of the game, Carol's very own *How To Do Extreme Sudoku* book, plus a shiny new PSP to give away.

All you need to do is call 0904 278 0022 with the correct answer to this question:

Which TV show is Carol Vorderman famous for appearing in?

A: Bullseye
B: Catchphrase
C: Countdown

1ST PRIZE
Sony PSP, copy of *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku* for PSP and a Sudoku book

TEN RUNNERS-UP
Copy of *Carol Vorderman's Sudoku* for PSP and a Sudoku book

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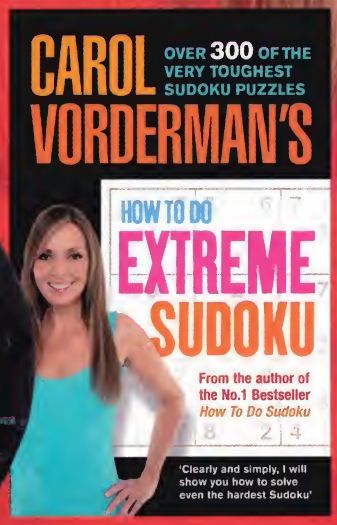

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SOLUTION

SYPHON FILTER: DARK MIRROR

HIDDEN EVIDENCE FOUND IN GABE'S LATEST P92

This fiendishly tough game solved just for you! P96

CAREER RATINGS

In the game's 'Mission' mode you can replay completed levels in order to unlock bonus features. The ratings system will give you a percentage complete score based on the number of types of kills you gain. It's all a bit cryptic, so below is listed what you have to do in order to up your rating and the best strategy to use. Note that every level has a different set of requirements, and you can check these requirements in 'Mission' mode. Also the game refers to each ranking system in three different ways within the menus, so above each explanation are the three ways you will see the same thing mentioned.

•STEALTH COMBAT SPECIALIST
•KILLS USING STEALTH
•STEALTH KILLS
In order to successfully land a stealth kill, push ↓ to crouch. Now sneak up on an unsuspecting enemy and equip the Mark 23 SD pistol which is silenced. Carefully aim a headshot and fire. If you're playing in 'Hard' mode, wear the IR goggles to view where the guards patrol before going in for a kill.

•COMBAT KNIFE SPECIALIST
•KNIFE KILLS
•KNIFE KILLS
Stun a guard with the EDT taser before knifing him – this will make life a lot easier. Also in 'Hard' mode where the enemies have a lot more health, you probably won't kill a man with one slice. Knife him just as soon as he gets up and you'll still get your stealth rating.

•ELITE WEAPONS EXPERT
•KILLS USING DARTS
•DART KILLS
Since X34 and explosive darts affect a wide area, make sure you fire them in between groups of guards to knock out as many as possible. Play a mission a few times and learn where the guards spawn from, since they're trapped in a certain area as they run into the devastation.

•SURVIVAL SPECIALIST
•FINISH WITHOUT FAILURE
•SURVIVAL
Obviously you've got to be extremely careful and learn the levels very well in order to not die. If you do die, make sure you quit out of 'Mission' mode before retrying so that your death isn't actually logged.

•TACTICAL COMBAT SPECIALIST
•KILLS USING THE ENVIRONMENT
•ENVIRONMENTAL KILLS
The Flare Gun is your best bet for taking your ranking higher. Make sure it's the flames that kill the men, not your bullets.

•COMBAT SHARP SHOOTER
•HARD MODE: HEAD SHOTS
•HEAD SHOTS
In order to rank this stat up you must land headshots in 'Hard' mode. Try to actively alert the guards so the game spawns more. This will greatly increase your chance of levelling up.

EPISODE 1: FIRE AND ICE

1.1: INSERTION POINT ALPHA

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
ID CARD
Blow up the barrel that's by the fence. Go up the ladder to get to the radio tower and the evidence is by the worker's body.

EVIDENCE 2
LIST OF NAMES
At the base of the radio tower hang onto the zip line. Swipe the key card you picked up from the first dead worker and the evidence is inside the room.

EVIDENCE 3
PAGE FROM KEMSYNTH SAFETY MANUAL
Pick up the page that's lying next to the ladder that leads into the distillation tower pit.

1.2: RED JACK

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
JACK MILLER'S BODY
At the start head downwards and left. Leap over the fence and you'll see his body and find the B1 card.

EVIDENCE 2
REQUISITION FORMS
Swipe the B1 card that you picked up earlier on the door marked B1 on the lower level.

EVIDENCE 3
PAGE FROM KEMSYNTH SAFETY MANUAL
Near the beginning of the level use the RTL in order to get across the gap. You'll find the evidence hidden away in the shadowy corner.

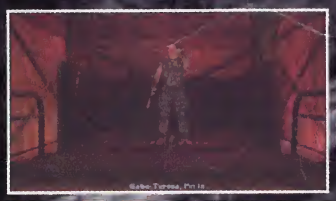
1.3: FINDING FREEMAN

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
HYDROPONICS EQUIPMENT
Scuttle through the first vent and shoot the flame jet switch. Now that the fire has gone out you can grab the evidence.

EVIDENCE 2
STACK OF KEMSYNTH PERSONNEL PAPERS
In the locker room, use the code '938' to get the papers.

EVIDENCE 3
RED SECTION ORDERS
It's right by the giant television on the sofa.



1.4: A MAN WITHOUT POWER

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
BROKEN KEMSYNTH VALVES
As you exit the lift pick up the valves lying behind the mesh.

EVIDENCE 2
DEAD KEMSYNTH
Fire at the switch on the wall behind and opposite the flame jet before using the RTL. You can now get to the body.

EVIDENCE 3
DEMOLITIONS INSTRUCTIONS
Before mounting the ladder by the jet, the instructions are in the darkened doorway.

1.5: FREEMAN'S FILES

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
KEMSYNTH TRANSACTION DATA
At the bottom of the stairs where the servers are, equip the EDSU goggles to locate the data.

EVIDENCE 2
NSA BUG
Once the technician has opened the door you should enter a room with an unfortunate deer's head on the wall.

EVIDENCE 3
FREEMAN'S EMAIL LIST
Before the technician opens the second door don't fire at the pipe. The evidence is in the laptop.

EPISODE 2: BLOOD AND OIL

2.1: UNDER NORAD'S NOSE

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

SIGNAL EMITTER

It's on top of the wings. Spot it using the EDSU goggles.

EVIDENCE 2

RADAR JAMMER

Look on the opposite wing to the Signal Emitter.

EVIDENCE 3

HOMING BEACON

This time equip the thermal goggles and look out into the snow to the front right side of the plane.

2.2: SECURITY SECTION D

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

GROW LIGHTS

It's on top of the crates in the snowy courtyard.

EVIDENCE 2

KEMSYNTH PAPERWORK

Don't hit the switch in the vents yet, instead creep up to the grate blocking the way.

EVIDENCE 3

WEAPONS CARTRIDGE

At the base of the bomb room at the back of the crates equip the EDSU goggles. In order to reach it you'll have to drop down and then edge around.

2.3: KREISLER'S GARDEN

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

EVIDENCE OF TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

After the suffocation sequence, you'll find this evidence on the left of the ammunition crate by the ventilation switch.

EVIDENCE 2

TRANSMITTER BUG

After the lift crashes, it's on the right of the large console.

EVIDENCE 3

TROPICAL FLOWER

Head for the lowest level of the hothouse and take a left as you enter. Grab the blossom form the flower bed.

2.4: FREEMAN'S ANSWER

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

MICROFILE

Go through the door on the left before descending the first ladder. Then pick up the file from the table in the centre.

EVIDENCE 2

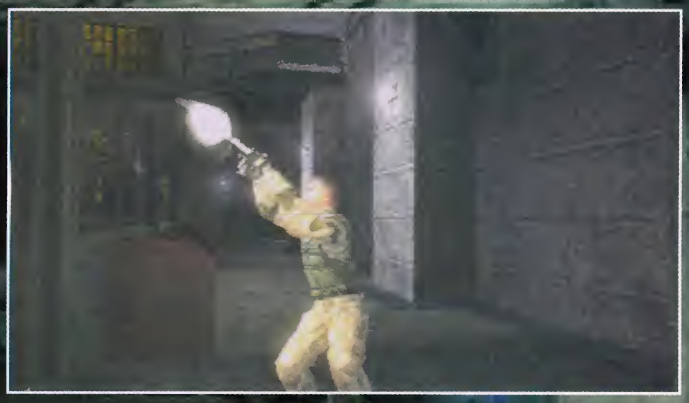
GRAFFITI

After you've descended the first ladder, set about destroying the three men and put on your night vision goggles. Walk into the room on the right.

EVIDENCE 3

FREEMAN'S PERSONAL PAPERS

It's in the alcove on the left of laser mine room; it's protected by another mine. The room is just after the ditch.



EPISODE 3: ANCIENT HISTORY

3.1: OLD FRIENDS

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

ORTEGA'S PAPERS

Jump up the building next to the level start and hang on the bar leading across to the other building. Shoot the top of the vent on the right and make your way through. Murder the man and nick his belongings, nice.

EVIDENCE 2

ONE OF HARGROVE'S MEN

Just before you rescue Addison head for the end of the alley and make your way up the boxes.

EVIDENCE 3

PRWC BANK STATEMENTS

Crawl through the vent after Hargrove looks at the files. Use the code '694' on the safe.

3.2: MEMORIES

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

ONE OF HARGROVE'S MEN

After firing the mounted gun, head for the distant right side of the level and pick up the fire extinguisher. Behind the fence is the body.

EVIDENCE 2

RED SECTION RADIO

Spray the fire extinguisher on the burning boxes by the gun and drag yourself up them.

EVIDENCE 3

LIST OF BOARDING SCHOOLS

Don't follow Hargrove into her room just yet, instead get on top of the crate by the window and shimmy around the building.

UNLOCKABLES

BONUS MISSIONS

There are five bonus missions to unlock and complete. Each one is unlocked by completing the tasks listed below:

BONUS LEVEL	HOW TO UNLOCK
Narbonne: Goodnight, Sweetheart	Beat all the time limits in the Training Missions
KemSynth Tower: Up A Column Without A Paddle	Complete 'Elite Weapons Expert'
Sama Yemen: Trapped In The Hornets Nest	Complete 'Combat Sharp Shooter'
Bangkok 1: Black Dragon Triad: Birds Of A Feather	Complete 'Story' mode on 'Normal' or 'Hard'
Bangkok 2: Bangkok Dragon Triad: Jimmy Zhou's Army	Complete 'Birds Of A Feather'

EPISODE 4: SAVING PRIVATE JANZEN

4.1: FORGED UNDER FIRE

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

ZIVMOVIC MANIFESTO

Shoot the first man and head back down the hole. Get outside and beware of the mine.

EVIDENCE 2

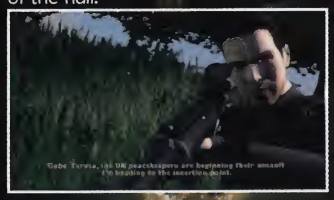
NATO SHIPPING LABEL

Grab the body armour from the ammo crate in the first room - the evidence is on top of the crates.

EVIDENCE 3

KRESS'S PAPERS

Don't let Janzen install the Hopper just yet; instead get rid of the mine and pick up the papers at the end of the hall.



4.2: TRAITOR IN OUR MIDST

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

JANZEN'S UNIT ORDERS

Get to the first door with wood over it and use the thermal goggles in the alley with the body at the end.

EVIDENCE 2

ZIVMOVIC CAPSULES

Snatch the drugs behind the contamination tent.

EVIDENCE 3

RED SECTION ORDERS

Heave yourself up the boxes to get to the platform over the last radio.

4.3: THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

BROKEN UN SEAL

Equip the EDSU goggles and get on a circular platform in the chemical silo room. It's behind the rubble.

EVIDENCE 2

ZIVMOVIC'S GPS

Come back to the chemical silo room and get on the platforms again, it's by the exit door. You'll need the EDSU goggles to see it.

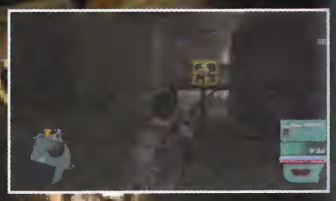
EVIDENCE 3

WAR CRIMINAL

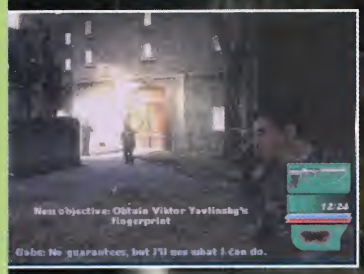
After using the RTL for a second time in the outside courtyard, continue along the walkway and then get onto the thin wooden bar.

4.4: THE TROJAN HORSE

NO HIDDEN EVIDENCE



EPISODE 5: ROOT OF ALL EVIL



5.1: THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

BODY OF AN ESCORT

Stick on the thermals and look for the body in the first courtyard with the spotlight.

EVIDENCE 2

FAKE PASSPORT

Look by the wardrobe in the bedroom next to the chief of security and his escort.

EVIDENCE 3

STOLEN PAINTING

Put on the EDSU goggles and search the lower part of the large staircase.

5.2: BLOOD MONEY

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

RARE FLOWER

Look on your radar while you are in the library room to find the hidden door. Check by the ashtray on top of the table.

EVIDENCE 2

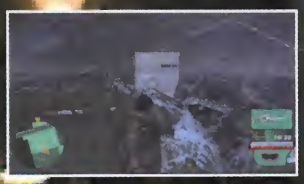
YAVLINKSKY'S PAPERS

Put the code '**415**' in the door leading upstairs in the hallway. Look in the safe behind the painting, using the code '919'.

EVIDENCE 3

DINNER RECEIPT

It's in the pocket of a coat in the cloakroom; wear the EDSU goggles to find it.



EPISODE 6: TOUCHSTONE

6.1: MEETING FATE

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

CARBON ALLOY CAMS AND HOOKS

Head down the ladder near the start and fire at the fence gate. Now move on the left ledge to the end.

EVIDENCE 2

CLIMBING HARNESS

Climb over the pipe near to the dead worker with the security card, then follow the ledge around the corner.

EVIDENCE 3

RED SECTION CORPSE

Open the opposite gate from the explosive barrel platform. After this, drop into the vault.

6.2: MEETING FATE

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1

HARGROVE'S PURSE

It's inside the lift - it's quite dangerous in there, take it carefully.

EVIDENCE 2

RED SECTION GEAR

Check by the scales in the bathroom.

EVIDENCE 3

KID'S TENNIS SHOE

Get to the lowest level of the multi-floor opening and equip the EDSU goggles.

UNLOCKABLES

DU CONTAINERS

There are five DU containers in each of the first three levels in episode four. They look like grey boxes and have little yellow lights on the side. They'll explode taking out any nearby enemies when shot. Destroying all five in a level will unlock a weapon.

BONUS LEVEL	HOW TO UNLOCK
M1 Super 90 in 'Mission' mode	Shoot DU containers in 4.1
M16A2 in 'Mission' mode	Shoot DU containers in 4.2
M4 Carbine in 'Mission' mode	Shoot DU containers in 4.3

TRAINING REWARDS

Even doing the training missions in a certain way will unlock you some extra weaponry.

WEAPON	HOW TO UNLOCK
SP-57	Finish 'Training 1' in under 1:25 mins
Famas	Finish 'Training 2' in under 3:00 minutes
UNP .45	Finish 'Training 3' without wasting a shot

EPISODE 7: SINGULARITY

7.1: RED SECTION

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
RED SECTION SHIPPING INVOICE
Edge around the trailer near to where you helped Lian and look inside it.

EVIDENCE 2
DATA SCAN FILTER
Where you turn off the bloody fan, it's in this maintenance room.

EVIDENCE 3
KEMSYNTH SHIPPING CONTAINER
Just before killing the boss, climb up on the crates and look for the container using the EDSU goggles.

7.2: DROWNING

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
RED SECTION PERSONNEL FILES
Check the control room on the mid level of the water chamber.

EVIDENCE 2
HYDRO SIMULATION DATA
It's in the same room as the Red Section personnel files.

EVIDENCE 3
AIT SUPER PROCESSING CHIP
Before killing the heavily armoured guard check the front and right of the console in the master control room.

7.3: EVENT HORIZON

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

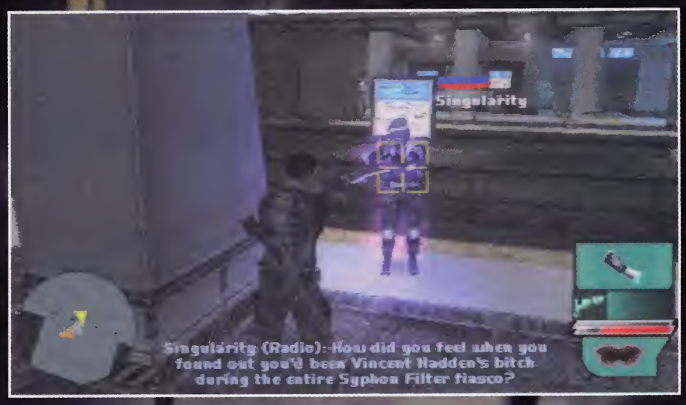
EVIDENCE 1
PROJECT DARK MIRROR DATA SET 1
Check the first server in the corridor.

EVIDENCE 2
PROJECT DARK MIRROR DATA SET 2
Look at the second server in the same corridor.

EVIDENCE 3
CENTRIFUGE PROJECT
It is on the damaged part of the centrifuge.

7.4: MATTER'S END

NO HIDDEN EVIDENCE



UNLOCKABLES

UNLOCKABLES IN BONUS MISSIONS

WEAPON	HOW TO UNLOCK
M249 SAW	Complete KemSynth Tower in less than 2:42 mins
Shot Defender	Complete Sana Yemen in less than 3:39 mins
M4 Carbine in 'Mission' mode	Shoot DU containers in 4.3

BONUS MISSIONS

NARBONNE GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1 AND 2
COMPLETE NARBONNE ON 'HARD' TO BE GIVEN THESE

EVIDENCE 3
STONE'S TOILET
Take a look at the toilet during this level and have a good sniff while you're there, too.

BANGKOK PART 1: BIRDS OF A FEATHER

HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
PIGEON SCAT
It's on the balcony near the start.

EVIDENCE 2
UNINFECTED PIGEON
Use the RTL to get over the street and begin to RTL again then drop down and head left. Climb up and edge along to the balcony.

EVIDENCE 3
PIGEON FEED
Get it off one of the guards above you near the start.

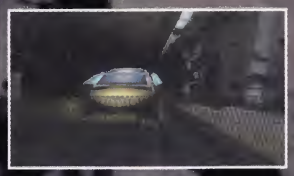
BANGKOK PART 2: JIMMY ZHOU'S ARMY

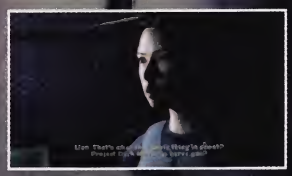
HIDDEN EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE 1
INCENSE FROM TAIWAN
Right at the start in the shrine.

EVIDENCE 2
MING VASE
Don't let the first vase in the hall break.

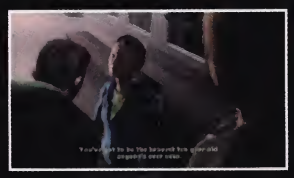
EVIDENCE 3
ELEVATOR CODES
Take a good look at one of the elevator panels.


Logan kicks Singularity into the path of an oncoming train.


Project Dark Mirror actually refers to a powerful nerve gas.

Wait for the credits to fully roll, there's more to come.

Addison's alive! Who'd have thought it!


Logan's a dad?

He can't become a family man; he's got a sequel to make.

SUPER MONKEY BALL ADVENTURE™

Finding the 'monkey see' easy but the 'monkey do' impossible? If so, you'll go bananas for our guide!

JUNGLE ISLAND

In-game missions are set by a host of monkey characters dotted around each map, who must be spoken to in order to set the ball in motion. You can't complete Papa's task at the start (the old monkey standing at the edge of the village), so continue on until you find a walled path with a spinning monster at its end. Walk into the Naysayer when he has stopped spinning to defeat him. You need to complete three out of the four puzzles to get into the palace.

In the palace gardens, you'll be asked to wake four sleepy cadets. This involves walking into the cannon next to the mission-initiating monkey and aiming just above the gongs in the trees in order to hit them. Work your way carefully between tree platforms to reach successive cannons. In the gardens you'll also find Dugdug, the groundskeeper. After talking to him, spring around the garden behind you, rolling into the birds that will swoop down to eat the flowers (that appear once the mission starts). Be quick, as if the flowers disappear he'll say you're too slow and you'll fail.

You can give your bananas to charity to help increase the joy rating in each island you visit. Makmak the charity monkey can be found in the palace gardens; you can give to him once you have collected 100 bananas. Your first encounter with Sisi the photographer is in the gardens, too. Just use the bounce pad near your entry point to reach his wooden platform. You'll find another puzzle gate behind a waterfall. Again, complete three of the four trays to pass. Head out onto the beach to learn your first spell. Beyond the smashable boulders, double back on yourself to the right, up a spiral platform. Talk to the lighthouse-keeper's wife. To complete her task, slide down the slope, through the ring then press ⊗ to glide over to the far island. Flying over the geysers will keep you in the air for longer. Across a bridge on the island lies another puzzle gate.

You can't help the lighthouse keeper's brother relight the flame yet, as you haven't acquired the correct spell, so instead, take a look around the rest of the island, bashing boulders until you reach Sisi the photographer near the base of the lighthouse. This time he will want you to get to the top of the lighthouse to pose. Do this by bouncing around its sides (being careful to keep pressing ↑ to make sure your monkey hugs the wall). The final bounce needs to take account of a slight overhang on the wall, so beware. Head back to the village and look for Dada who will be standing on his top hat. Use the HUD (yellow arrows) to find all the other monkeys wearing top hats. Bump into them (whilst trying to avoid them seeing you coming) to knock their hats off. In the last monkey's hat (no matter what order you take them in), you will find the missing infant. Find Sisi near a rock column slightly beyond the start point of the last mission for another photograph exercise.

Just beyond the long bridge you posed on lies Owow and his four white bee hives. Head over to him. Collect the bees from the seven hives that have sprung up around the village by using the bounce pads (you can also bounce from destroyed hives). When done, return and bump into the hives to replace the bees. Return to Papa (at the entrance to the village). His task requires casting the boxing spell. Afterwards, use the HUD to locate the orange marks at the location of the bulbs of the well weeds (not the weeds themselves, mind), and punch them silly. Speaking to Popo the forgetful messenger (he's dressed in a blue uniform) will trigger another mission. He's looking for Dada, the monkey who is fond of standing upon his top hat (and fond of asking you to bump into other top-hat-wearing simians). He lives in a hut on top of a large rock column just beyond the village centre. Use the series of bounce pads on the cliff face to reach the top of the column. When you've increased the joy in the Jungle Island to above 60 per cent, you need to return to the Palace to talk to the king. The Princess is the second monkey on the left and the Prince is second on the right. Bump everyone else. After the cut-scene, head to the palace entrance to learn the spells necessary to travel to the other three kingdoms from the astro-monkey. The spell to enter Zootopia is 'Woo Woo Woo'. The spell to enter Moonhaven is 'Ei Woo Woo', and the spell to warp back to Jungle Island is 'Yay Woo Woo'.

ZOOTOPIA

Talk to Cree d'Pee at the level's opening twice to start the first mission. Similar to the task in Jungle Island, you must locate the trapped monkeys using the arrows on your HUD (orange) then bump into them with moderate speed to release them. One mascot is slightly obscured from view behind the hedge which is itself behind the magic act. Standing at the fountain at the end of the main street is the astro-monkey. Talk to him to receive the invisi-ball spell, 'Woo Woo Poo'. On the left side of the main street lies the duckshoot. Talk to the monkey in front of it. Use your invisi-ball spell, then enter the attraction. Move slowly behind the robotic monkey then duck left next to the last playing monkey to avoid bumping into the robot as it walks back. Travel along the wooden bridge, the cog, the duck shoot platform (pressing ↓ to avoid hitting the back row) and the circular objects containing the actual targets (moving onto them when they stop) to reach the trapped monkeys. Be careful not to bump into anything, if possible, or you'll be spotted. At the top, push the three star-emblazoned platforms down to release them. Head down the tunnel next to the magic act, past the strongman contest and through the door. When through, talk to the astro-monkey dead ahead for another spell, the sticky ball, 'Yay Poo Poo'.

Afterwards, walk up the path and across the rollercoaster track to speak to its operator. To clear this challenge, wait until the train has passed through the station then chase it around the track. The first section (after the climb) is rather

- just concentrate on not falling off the more cambered sections of the track. You need to bump each section three times to send it careering off, which apparently counts as 'saving' those inside. Behind some pot plants on the same platform as the rollercoaster operator is Makmak the charity monkey (use the boxing ball chant). This time, he'd like 200 bananas. If you've not got that many yet, remember his location for later.

Now, head up the spiral pathway to meet Boomboom, the orange monkey. You'll have to race his remote-controlled monkey ball around the rollercoaster track. It won't start to move until you get to the station. It's a little wide - the best place to pass is the sweeping turn just after the bumpy straight, when you've got a little speed up. A lot of skill is still required, though. Next, talk to the female monkey standing before the large tree beside the monkey cannon. You'll need to collect four children stranded atop balloons floating high above the rollercoaster. To do this, use the monkey cannon and wing ring to fly around and bump into the balloons. Their positions are marked in orange on your HUD - this is simply a test of skill. Note that completing this mission will unlock the cannon for later use.

Roll around the walls surrounding the tree at which our female monkey stands to reach the platform Sisi is on, then use the now-unlocked monkey cannon to reach your posing position (to the right of the rollercoaster, as Sisi sees it). You can also do this by following the coaster's track to the right then dropping off in the middle of the first corner.

Return to where you first spoke to Boomboom to find another puzzle gate. You will need to beat five of the six to continue. On 'Eternal', wait for the third hole (your side) to pass, then sprint forward and into the goal. When you enter the tower, head right then right again (taking out the boxing Naysayer with your boxing ball spell). This exit out of the tower leads to a maze. Talk to the rather spoiled monkey standing in the next courtyard for your next task. Use your HUD to find the eight balloons in the maze - you have to find them and bring them back one by one. If you take the left fork from the first crossroads after the bendy dirt road into the maze, you can roll up the side wall of the section with the down ramp of the maze in it. You will find Sisi here, and one of the balloons if you balance your way down the thin path. Another balloon is in the gutter of the large dodgems tent, requiring you only to roll up a side ramp with speed (at worst) to collect them.

The next mission can be found at the dodgems tent itself. Simply use the boxing ball spell to bat all the dodgems into the gutter. Make your way back to Sisi now to participate in another photography mini-game. This one's a test of skill - bear in mind the second thin bridge section is curved to the right when rolling down it. Near the exit to main street within the maze you'll find a large top hat, with the park's caretaker. His challenge isn't too difficult. Using your HUD, locate the banana peels littered around the maze. Activate your sticky ball spell to pick them up, when you roll over them. They're easy to find, with the possible exceptions of one at the point where the spoiled monkey once stood, and another in the gutter of the dodgems tent. Now it's time for a quick excursion into Moonhaven, so use the spell 'Ei Woo Woo'.

MOONHAVEN

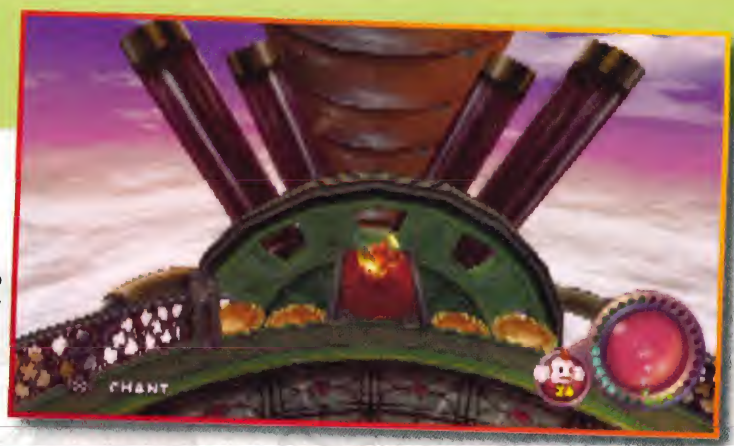
After you're greeted and told to go to the engine room, head forward through the bridge that travels through the centre of the cog with 'Moonhaven' written on it. Once there, head up one of the ramps onto a higher bridge platform. Head right onto a circular platform and position yourself inside the groove of the cog. Hold ⊗ and push the analogue stick to the side to rotate the cog with your monkey still in it. Do so to reach the lower level, then follow the cogs right to reach another puzzle gate. On 'Skid Slalom', bear in mind that your movements of the analogue stick determine the direction in which the bumpers lie, so flick left or right on the approach to them to clear yourself a gap. On bowls, run around the cone shapes until you gain enough momentum to fly off the edge and reach the next one - this sounds easier than it is, though. Once the door is opened, watch the cut-scene then double back on yourself - the astro-monkey will have reappeared to teach you the Scalar-Ball spell: 'Poo Poo Ei'. Once you've listened to your teacher, return to Zootopia through the spell 'Woo Woo Woo'.

ZOOTOPIA

Head back into Fat Cat's tower. To kill the big-mouthed Naysayer, first activate the scalar-ball spell, and then let him eat you. Whilst inside, press ⊗ to expand and pop him. Head past him into the centre platform of the tower then head left, avoiding the sweeping revolving barriers. At the apparent dead-end, activate sticky-ball spell to make some sections of the scenery glow yellow. Head up the spiral tube covering the cylindrical tube in front of you, following the yellow path upwards to reach Cree d'Pee at the summit, beyond the moving platforms. He'll open a gate for you. Afterwards, head up the yellow pipe to the left. Once you reach the centre circle section, take a run-up to skip across to the pipe to the right (the one that travels upwards beside the central cylinder). You can fall over the lip slightly to another yellow section - this offers a better chance of success. Head up the yellow scenery to a rotating bridge, at the four points of which lie the puzzles belonging to the puzzle gate overhead - tackle these. 'ZZ Stop' contains a cheat solution - at the first right turn head to the far side of the platform, then double back on yourself and career left. This way, you can land on the same platform the goal's on without having to tackle the puzzle honestly! When all four are completed, stand on the centre of the rotating bridge. At the top, roll out of the bowl and talk to Cree d'Pee. When he's done, use sticky-ball to climb the ladder next to him. Climb back down the ladder to talk to Cree d'Pee again.

To activate the circuits, roll around the bowl, hitting the nine targets at its edge, thus switching on the nine lights underneath. Hit the switch at the centre to turn that on, too. Exit the bowl before the hole appears. Use the boxing ball spell to hit each of the screw columns, so the bolts attached to them create a circuit on either floor level or high above, according to where the silver spheres are. They'll have sparks flying from them when they're in position. This will shut down the park's rides, triggering a cut-scene. Head onwards to Moonhaven, so execute the spell, 'Ei Woo Woo'!

MOONHAVEN



Your first mission in Moonhaven is provided by Bobo, who stands to the left of the square machinery on the start platform. To complete his task, head over the bridge through the Moonhaven cog. The first three switches lie to your immediate right as you exit the bridge, to the left atop a free-standing ramp and at the far left of the raised platform dead-ahead. Remember, you have to activate each group of three within 15 seconds. Keeping on the upper level, head over to the circular platform next to the Moonhaven cog. Flick the first switch of the second set here before hopping into the cog and rotating it to the top. Here, you'll find a balloon-wielding monkey and the second switch. Next, head right, past two sets of hammers to the final switch of the second set.

For the third set, enter the giant cog again and travel to the bottom. If you double back on yourself, you'll find a large bowl filled by a rotating bridge. The initial switch of this set is in the centre of the bridge. The other two are located at the point of the bowl on either side of the rotating bridge's structure. Next, head back through the Moonhaven cog, down a grey path, to an octagonal platform containing a number of barrels. Flick the switch here then take the path to the left. This will lead you to the final two switches.

Head over to the top of the Moonhaven cog. After talking to the balloon-carrying monkey, you'll have to lubricate the machinery dotted about. To do this head left from the monkey, past the single pair of hammers, into pinball gutter wires. Make sure you activate scalar-ball, first. The goal here is to take every one of the available routes through the gutter (using scalar-ball to reach some of the wider, later ones). Each should lead to one of the horns, into which the balloons will automatically fly. Make your way back to the top of the cog for each balloon. Head back to the circular path above the area containing the first three switches. Talk to the monkey here to start another challenge. Activate sticky-ball spell to pick up all of the bananas on the platform below, the circular raised platform and the sky box above (again, look for the yellow scenery to climb up). When you're done, head beyond the rubbish funnel towards the glass building. Destroy the Naysayer using the scalar-ball attack, then enter. Talk to Sisi in the next area, then use the cannon to fly over to the posing point. This is located in the ornate bowl just below the golden funnel at the top of the automaton, so aim about halfway up. Afterwards, take the cog to the rear of the bridge downwards and talk to the first monkey you meet. To solve this riddle, return to the bridge where Sisi took your photo and bounce on the bellows to either side to pump the little 'uns out. Talk to the tie-wearing monkey next to the previous one, next. You need to fix some leaks in the bowl above you. To do this, enable sticky-ball, pick up the four patches next to the cog, then head to the bowl and roll over the steam leaks. Head down to the circular platform to talk to Bobo the engineer. His task involves taking the left-hand path that appears when you talk to him, treading on the gold buttons. This is a test of skill only - be careful not to push the nub to its extremes.

Fall through the hole in the centre of the circular platform. Here you'll find our astro-monkey once more. Learn his new spell then walk over to the ice in front of you. It will melt. Use the cannon to reach the undercity - head for the lowest platform. Talk to the monkey. To complete this task, turn yourself into wood then bump into the flame-holder. Take the spiral path away from your initial platform. To defeat the Naysayer, wait until it lifts its arms before bumping into it. When it turns its back to you, run into its tail to cause damage. Repeat this process. Light the two flame-holders as you travel up the spiral platform. After the disappearing paths, use scalar-ball to defeat the Naysayer before doubling back on yourself to change back into wood, collect the flame and return to light holder number three. Light number four at the end of the disappearing staircase then avoid the air from the fans. Bounce on the metal pads to reach a platform above (note you can only bounce once on each pad). From here, head down the ramp and straight on to a second platform to light Flam'lam's flame-holder. Drop off Flam'lam's platform anywhere between Flam'lam and the path to the puzzle gate. On a lower platform here you'll find Bobo. He's lost his toolbox. Return to Flam'lam's platform, to the blue balloon, and retrieve it for him. Head back to the platform containing the puzzle gate. If you head left onto another platform you'll meet Captain Simian. To collect his balloons, head back to the puzzle gate platform and head right. Next, head over to where Flam'lam is standing. Then proceed into the rain-soaked bowl. The third can be found along the path that constitutes the left exit. The final two are trickier, located on a long, thin platform just before the third flame-holder you previously ignited. If you go to where the first balloon was, you can run and jump down to the start platform then take two trips right back to the puzzle gate, over the disappearing paths and fans, to bring the two remaining balloons home. Head over to the puzzle gate next. On 'Pitch and Putt', you're looking to roll down the initial hill at just the right speed to bounce in a straight line across the remaining platforms. Once you know the speed, it becomes a lot easier. On 'Sidestep', take the left-hand path for an easier finish. Completing five of the six trays will open the lift for you to enter.

Most of the pathway is underwater, so turn into wood and stand on the golden switch to your right. Hop across to the next platform when the water level rises, then repeat the process to access another platform at the far end of the area. Use another switch to reach a pump pool full of ice. Carry on through this, up another path to a further switch. To your right is a platform that doubles back on itself, going upwards. Use this to reach another platform, from the end of which you can reach another ice-filled pump pool. Take the raised exit from this, using the switch to raise the water level again. To your right, you should see a platform with a lift behind it, inhabited by Makmak the charity monkey and Bobo the engineer. Use the series of switches (that bring up paths of ice blocks) to traverse the bridges and make it to this point. Give 150 bananas to Makmak before going into the lift and down to your arrival area. Here, find the puzzle gate and talk to Ru'fus the foremonkey. To complete his challenge, head to the main arrival area (with the rotating bridge) to collect your first little 'un. One by one, take them to the following places: next to the free-standing ramp on the same platform, next to the switch on the raised platform above you, next to Bobo at the very start of the level, in front of the lift next to Mo d'mo, through the hole in the floor around the rotating bridge (where you'll find two levers), next to the puzzle gate and finally behind Ru'fus himself. Return to the astro-monkey's former position to learn how to get to Monkitropolis.

MONKITROPOLIS

Talk to the police officer in front of you again. Enable sticky-ball before heading left from our policemonkey. The orange markers on the HUD show the horns that are plugged. Bump into them all then return the covers to the funnel by the officer to complete the mission. Sisi stands nearby. Talk to him then run up the staircase near the road before turning around and balancing along the route to the top of the statue.

Head towards the police station across the road from the top of

the staircase to chat to our astro-monkey again. After learning the Tetherball spell, 'Poo Poo Woo', talk to officer Neenaw inside the station. The monsters you'll need to catch will appear as orange dots on your HUD. They will be in roughly the same area as the now uncovered horns. To catch each one, approach with invisi-ball enabled, run it down then enable tether-ball and bump into it. Return to the police station with your prisoner and repeat times four. Once done, exit the police station by the door you first used, follow the building round to the left, cross the small bridge and locate the puzzle gate. Time for more trays!

On 'Backflip', it's possible to skip the entire level by just falling off the right-hand side of the platform at the first opportunity, though you have to carefully control your monkey's bounce at the bottom. Also, you need to rush through 'Squeegee' as soon as you see the platforms begin to straighten out. It's impossible to complete it in any other way but in one go. After the door opens, head on through and get in! Talk to the astro-monkey once more, then proceed along the road until you see officer Neenaw next to the raceway. Enable speedy-ball spell then talk to him. You need to race around the track, turning right, against the unicycle gang. There isn't really too much indication of how you are doing, so just continue racing as quickly as you can until officer Neenaw stops you. After the race is over, find the left-hand off ramp into the noise factory. Talk to the monkey inside. To complete this challenge, locate the pipe running up the wall next to the three crates then activate the sticky-ball spell. Roll up this pipe until its end. Tilt the section you land on 90 degrees using the ⊗ button and left or right on the analogue stick, lining it up with the other set of pipes. Continue up this pipe afterwards until you reach another tilt-able section. Again, rotate this by a quarter then make your way back into the main body of the factory. A second pipe sprouting from the floor will lead to another pipe section to be rotated 90 degrees. Next, exit the noise factory and talk to Popo the messenger. The person who requires the balloon is the noise factory operator. Climb over the pipes as before to reach the factory roof, where he has moved to. Return to the main factory floor and enter the central elevator. Enter the only available tunnel and, after a scene, talk to Queen Feefee. Use sticky-ball to pick up her permit, then return to the guarded tunnel entrance and go through. The mission at the top is completed by rolling into the monkey cannon and shooting the robochimps at each of the small islands surrounding Monkitropolis. Use the second, left-hand cannon to shoot yourself to the Sun Garden in Kongri-la, afterwards.

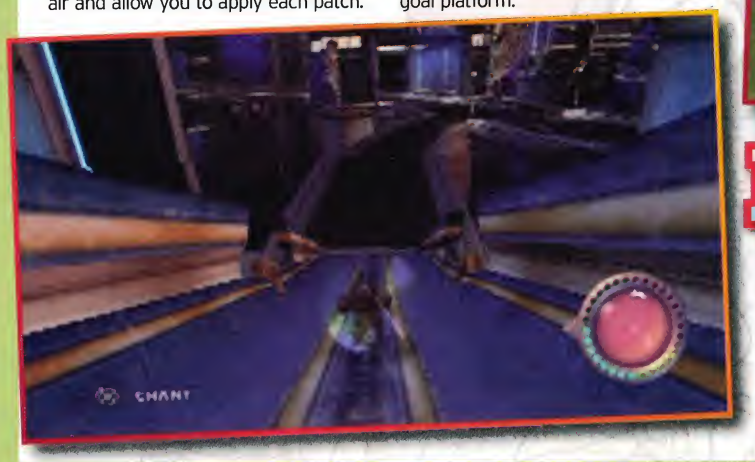
KONGRI-LA

In the Sun Garden ahead you'll find a puzzle gate. Nine of the ten trays must be completed to progress. On 'Stinky Steps', you can take a short-cut by heading down the first two flights of stairs then dropping off to the right onto the goal platform below. 'Floor Slider' is best played by lining yourself up so you can take a straight line all the way through. On 'Hoopsnake' wait for a second or so after you're released before running to the right as fast as you can: this should give you the correct timing to succeed. On 'Slalom', run as fast as you can before slowing down at bends just enough to turn. Finally, on 'Jawbridge' you don't have enough time to step on each platform so try to run across as many as you can before the split. Once the doors open, head to the one leading to the Sun Garden itself. Talk to our astro-monkey once again, who'll teach you the hover-ball spell: Yay Yay Poo. Talk to the guard standing by your original entrance to the garden. To complete his task, use hover-ball to head over to the seven islands, bumping into the robochimps you've just launched.

Press ⊗ while hovering to take a running jump across to each island. In one of the puzzle gate doorways, you'll find a monkey with a Kongri-lan mask on. To complete his challenge, use the monkey cannon and ring to get airborne. Fly into the golden funnel of the tower dead-ahead. Once you emerge from the other side of this funnel you can re-open your wings to continue to the other towers where you must do exactly the same thing. Back in the Sun Garden, talk to the monkey with many balloons. To please him, you'll have to use hover-ball to fly out to the six trees surrounding the garden, each time with a balloon in tow, in order to water them. The balloon will automatically attach itself to each tree, like previous challenges. Help the monkeys in the Sun Garden travel down to the domes using a lift on the small island to the right of the monkey who challenged you to redirect the tower funnels. In the first dome, you'll have to use hover-ball to cross the broken bridges. Use the platforms to the left, boosting between the gaps, to reach the central platform. Talk to the monkey standing to your left, here. To align the lenses, chant the scalar-ball spell then walk onto the ventilation fan. Land on the ledge at the top of the dome and bump into the first lens. The ray of sunlight will point to the next lens' position. Make yourself big to float down to your destination. Repeat as necessary. Next, talk to the second monkey on the central platform.

To remove the crabs, enable the tether-ball spell. Don't approach these critters from the front, as they'll bat you away in the blink of an eye. Bump into them before dragging them across the rocky path to the funnel next to the monkey you're trying to help. Make your way back to your entrance to the dome, turning right this time to talk to Popo. Take his balloon back to the central platform to Digdig (who you've just assisted). After all the tasks in the first dome are completed, take the path next to the lens-obsessed monkey, defeating the boxing Naysayer and skipping across the platform bits. Behind a monkey cannon lies the tunnel to dome number two. Turn right at the end of the tunnel to give 250 bananas to Makmak, the charity monkey.

Afterwards, roll over to the far side of the dome, to a cracked, leaking tunnel. Jekjek's challenge is easy to pass: pick up the patches that appear behind you using sticky-ball, then roll over the leaking sections to plug them. Make sure to step on the red switch on the tunnel floor to stop the air and allow you to apply each patch. Act quickly, however. Once done, use the now-safe tunnel to reach the King and Queen of Kongri-la. After the scene, complete the one tray locking the puzzle gate. Here, roll up the right-hand side of the ramp, flying off from the left wall at around the halfway point to land, hopefully, right on the goal platform.



JUNGLE ISLAND

Return to the tree palace. Enable sticky-ball and use it to climb up the tree labelled 'Sticky'. To complete Bongbong's challenge, ring the bells in three sequences. The first is green, yellow, red then blue. The second is green, yellow, red, blue, red, yellow, green then blue. The last is green, yellow, red, blue red, yellow, green, blue, red, green, blue then yellow. A cut-scene will then announce the wedding of Prince Abeabe and Princess Dee-dee's wedding and the game is complete!

Beat the world, but don't tell them how you did it...

CHEATS & TIPS

Frantix

CHEAT CODES

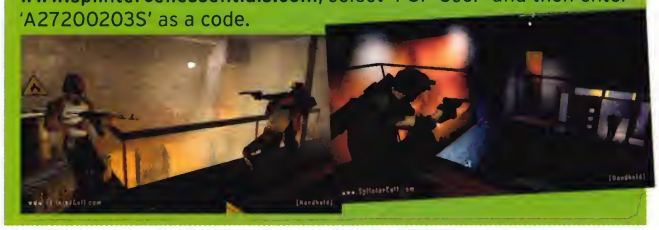
Hold L + R at the level select screen to bring up the codes screen, then enter any of the following codes and press ⊗ to confirm.

Cheat	Code
Level select	LVLANY1
Disable Level select	LVLANY0
Invincibility	INVINC1

Splinter Cell Essentials

UNLOCK BONUS MISSIONS

At the 'Bonus Mission' screen, hold SELECT and press L, R, L, R, L, R. Keep repeating the code to unlock the next bonus mission in the sequence. There are three in total, 'Paris-Nice', 'Heroin Factory' and 'Television Free Indonesia'. Alternatively, use your PSP's Internet connection to log onto **www.splintercellessentials.com**, select 'PSP User' and then enter 'A27200203S' as a code.



Exit

Enter any of the following codes at the title screen. You must enter them in sequence starting with the 'Situation 8' code.

Cheat	Code
Unlock Situation 8	L, R, ←, →, □, ○, ⊗, △
Unlock Situation 9	△, ↓, ○, ←, ⊗, ↑, □, →
Unlock Situation 10	→, ↓, ↑, ←, ○, ⊗, R, L

Talkman

EXTRA MINI-GAMES

Fulfil the following requirements to unlock the corresponding mini-game...

Game	How to unlock
Piko Poko	Get 'A' grades for all the puzzle pieces in the English Listening Game
Double Squash	Get 'A' grades for all the puzzle pieces in the Pronunciation Game in any language

EXPAND

MORE PERIPHERALS PUT TO THE TEST

Once again we've got two new items from the world of PSP accessories for you to peruse. Read on to find out if they are worth your time and money...

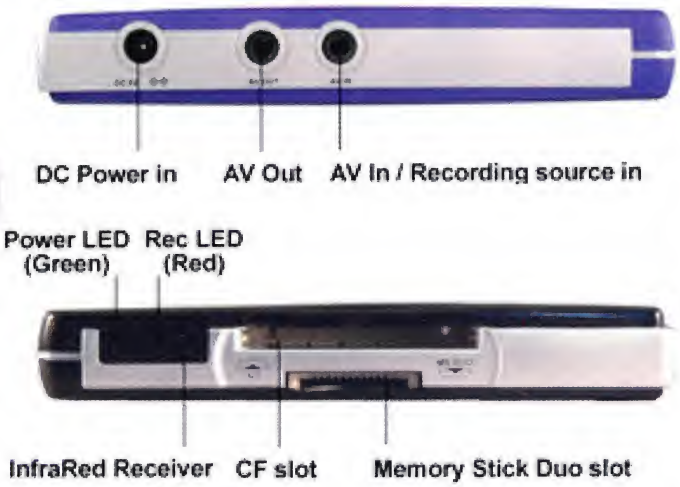
Storvision MiniVCR SV-1000 MPEG4 Video Recorder £89.99

REMEMBER THAT NEUROS MPEG4 Video Recorder that we featured last month and were mightily impressed with? Well this does exactly the same thing. It even looks the same apart from the fetching blue colour. All you have to do is plug this little box into your DVD Player, TV, camcorder, satellite receiver or other compatible device and it will record onto a Memory Stick. Yes, even the ones that fit in your PSP! There's no messing around with file conversion or compression, the SV-1000 does it all for you. Clever, eh?

As with the Neuros, the quality isn't as pin-sharp as a UMD movie, but it does mean you don't have to buy the same movie twice on DVD and UMD. As we said, this is like the Neuros in every way and you'll need a 1GB Memory Stick if you want to record a whole movie. These are getting cheaper all the time so you'll certainly save yourself a packet in the long run as you won't have to fork out for overpriced UMDs.

The SV-1000 can also output MP3s to, say, your stereo, or display photos on a TV, but the movie recording is its main function and this is where it shines. We keep saying this is exactly the same as the Neuros, which it is, except for one small detail – it's £60 cheaper. That massive saving makes this little box of tricks an even better bargain that deserves to kill off UMD movies once and for all. Browse **www.mymemory.co.uk** for more info.

SCORE: ★★★★★



Game Dr Glare Shield £9.99

IF YOU EVER find yourself in the glaring sunlight trying to play your PSP then this contraption has been made just for you. After a few seconds of screwing in, it will be attached to the top of your PSP and ready to go. Simply lift the flap and the 'Advanced Automatic Pop-up Function' kicks into action and your PSP screen is immediately shielded from the sun. We didn't make that up, that's what it says on the packaging. Of course, the most advanced the function gets is three springs, which is a bit of an anti-climax. The fun doesn't stop there as it also acts as a 'Rugged Screen Scratch Protector' when folded away.

While the Glare Shield certainly does its job and manages to be both lightweight and compact, we just didn't like it. It's rather flimsy and looks somewhat unappealing when bolted to the top of the console. Obviously if you're shallow like us then this will be a problem, but for some of you out there this may not be a worry. To be honest, if you're in sunshine that's so bright it makes the screen impossible to see, why the hell are you playing on a PSP anyway? Shouldn't you be sunbathing or having a barbecue or something? In conclusion, if you don't mind making your PSP look a little weird and the sun really is your worst enemy, then one of these should be on your shopping list. If neither of those things apply to you then there's probably not much point in bothering, find a tree to sit under instead.

SCORE: ★★

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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT...

...PSPGEN

Console History

It was the mid-Eighties and Sega wanted to loosen the stranglehold that Nintendo held on the gaming market. While Sega's 8-bit Master System (a direct competitor to Nintendo's NES) proved extremely popular in Europe and South America, it was a different story in Japan and the US. With Nintendo holding over 90% of the market share in both countries, Sega knew that its next console needed to be something very special indeed if it was to make any headway.

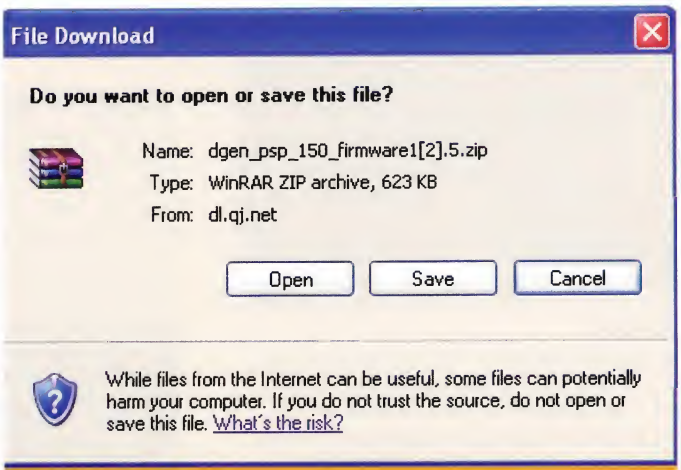
With its System 16 arcade board already proven popular, Sega decided to use its architecture as the base of its new console. Once the machine was finally completed, it would be relatively straightforward for Sega to port its arcade games to the home system with little or no effort. Work began in earnest and Sega's 16-bit machine was eventually released in Japan in October 1988. The US launch (where it was known as the Genesis) followed in January 1989 - although it initially appeared in just New York and Los Angeles for the first eight months of its life - while UK owners finally received 16-bit power in November 1990, nearly two years after the Japanese release.

While the Mega Drive was never a huge success in Japan, it became quite a different story in the US and Europe. Thanks to Nintendo's decision to not include things like blood in games such as *Mortal Kombat*, Sega soon realised that it could target the older gamer, and thanks to a handy deal with Electronic Arts, the Mega Drive was soon host to many fantastic sports titles, including *John Madden's Football*, *NHL Hockey* and *FIFA International Soccer* (yes it was actually amazing back then). Then in 1991, *Sonic The Hedgehog* arrived and thanks to its ridiculously fast visuals, incredibly cool looks and fantastic gameplay Sega finally had a hero to battle Nintendo's *Mario*. By 1992 Sega had finally eclipsed Nintendo in the US and held 55% of the market share, a staggering achievement.

Although the release of Nintendo's SNES looked like it would harm Sega's new position, *Sonic* saved the day again and thanks to a clever and aggressive marketing campaign with famous slogans such as "Sega does what Nintendon't" Sega managed to hold its position and gained a 65 per cent share of the market, an amazing result that its later consoles never managed to replicate. Sega's 16-bit wonder was discontinued in 1996, but thanks to Nintendo's new Virtual Console, many of its games will now live on again. Of course, if you can't wait until the end of the year, you may want to carry on reading...

Setting up the emulator in five easy steps

STEP 1



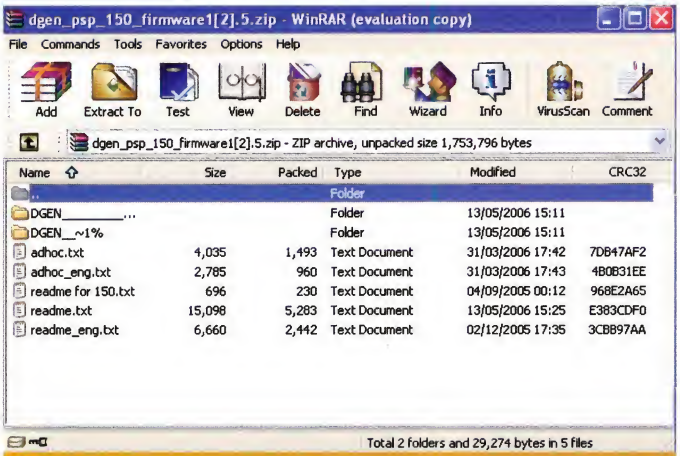
STEP 2

Right then, so we've all determined how great Sega's 16-bit console actually was, now let's get the emulator up and running. While several emulators exist for the Mega Drive, the one we're going to stick with is the excellent DGEN, its current version is 1.50 and it's available from here (Step 1).

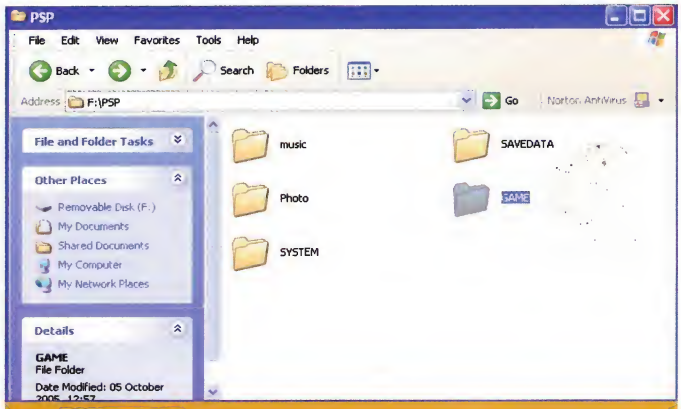
Right then, download the required file (either 1.5 or 1.0 depending on your firmware (Step 2) and unzip it to your desktop (Step 3). Once you've downloaded and opened up your emulator, you need to get the PSP linked up to your PC in order to transfer across the relevant files. Connect your PSP via the USB port and open up your PSP file. You're looking for the folder named PSP. Open it up and take a look at what's inside. (Step 4). If you don't have one already, set up a new folder called GAME. Once that's done, transfer across the DGEN and DGEN1% folders that you've just unzipped and then place them in the GAME folder.

The next thing you need to do is create a ROM folder to store your games in. Open up the DGEN folder and create a new folder called ROM (Step 5) this is where you need to put any Sega Mega Drive ROMs you may have (and no, we're not going to tell you where they can be downloaded from, so don't write in and ask us). While DGEN is able to accept zipped files, it's also possible to use .smd and .bin files (although these will obviously take up more space on your card.)

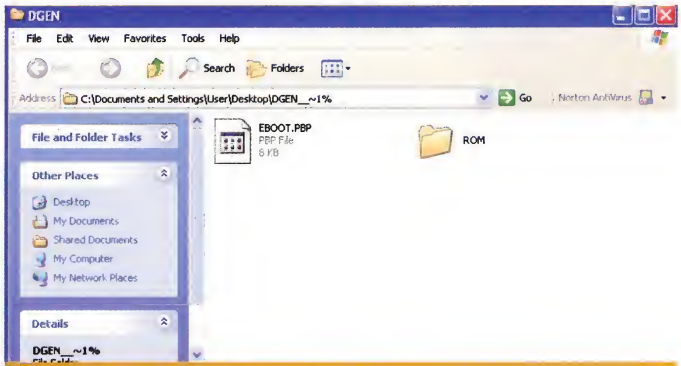
And there you have it; if you've followed our instructions properly, you'll now be the proud owner of a portable Sega Mega Drive (a far cheaper alternative to the real thing, The Sega Nomad) which still costs over £100 on the likes of eBay. ■



STEP 3



STEP 4



STEP 5

So you've got your emulator up and running, but what games should you pick up? Check these beauties out...

Strider

Quite simply the Mega Drive's greatest arcade conversion. Of course, it also helps that *Strider* happens to be a superb game, but this adaptation really is something special. Everything about the original Capcom game has been perfectly captured. All the bosses are there, Strider himself is animated to perfection and the level design is to die for. The Mega Drive even boasts a superior soundtrack that puts the arcade original to shame. Our only gripe is that we find it rather easy to complete.

Streets Of Rage 2

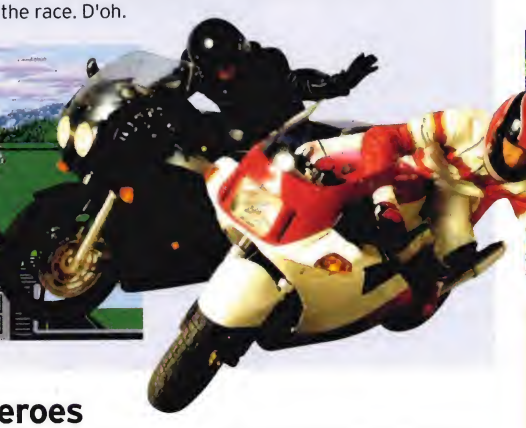
Known as *Bare Knuckle 2* in Japan, this is a superb follow-up and the greatest scrolling fighter available on the Mega Drive. Huge, well-detailed sprites, some amazing tunes and an array of tough bosses mean that this should be at the top of every Mega Drive owner's list. Each character now has some cool new attacks and the enemies come thick and fast, while a third title was eventually released, the second chapter is easily the best.

Sonic The Hedgehog 1 & II

The first two *Sonic* adventures are some of the greatest platformers to ever grace Sega's 16-bit consoles. While the original game is a wonderful slice of retro heaven, *Sonic*'s second adventure really pushes the boat out and adds even more to Sega's platformer. Improved visuals, some superb soundtracks, a great bonus round and the addition of a fantastic multi-player mode means that the *Hedgehog*'s second outing really shouldn't be missed.

Road Rash

It's outrageous to think that EA's excellent franchise has received a next-gen update (or current gen for that matter). Originally released in 1991, the game proved an instant hit thanks to your ability to knock other racers off their bikes with various weapons to ensure that you made the coveted first place. Police officers would give chase at various parts of the game and had to be avoided at all cost, as a bust would lose you the race. D'oh.

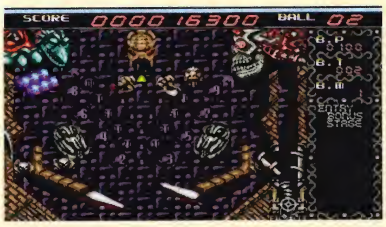


Gunstar Heroes

Amazing platformer/shoot-'em-up from Treasure that features superlative graphics, boisterous spot effects and some seriously challenging gameplay. The talented guys at Treasure (who were ex-Konami employees) pulled off all sorts of technical tricks that many thought were impossible on Sega's console and the end result is one of the most frenetic blasters around. It's certainly a tough game, but there's so much variety to the gameplay and level design that you won't be able to leave it alone. Utterly essential.

Devil Crash

An excellent pinball game that was originally available on NEC's PC Engine. Featuring a fantasy inspired theme, *Devil Crash* has everything you'd expect from a good pinball title, including a well-designed table, superb ball physics and a completely rocking soundtrack that takes an age to loop. Known in the UK as *Dragon's Fury* (Sega had to take all the satanic references out) *Devil Crash* is one of the most addictive games around and ideally suited to playing on the move.



THIS JUST IN...

The latest emulator updates for your PSP

It's been a busy month in the wacky world of homebrew, and we've certainly seen some interesting developments to the emulator scene.

The most exciting development is the new improved updates to YoyoFR and Laxer3a's excellent SNES emulator SnesPSP. TYL 0.4.2 was recently released and boasts some new features and a lot of fixed bugs. The annoying in-game pop-ups from earlier versions are now a thing of the past, while it no longer crashes if you exit the emulator (a problem with the 2.00 + PSPs only). As for new additions, the most interesting is the 'Pseudo Sleep Mode' that is being worked on – although the 300mhz setting for eLoader 0.97 is also rather handy and gives it a nice speed boost. Throw in some nice fading effects on the interface and you'll be left with what's shaping up to be one of the greatest emulators currently available on the PSP. Just make sure you don't tell Nintendo about it.

Meanwhile, the latest 8-bit emulator to hit the scene is one for the humble BBC (a machine so old, many of us at **Go>Play** first used them at school). Considering it was only released at the beginning of May, it's already pretty solid and is well worth a download, if only so you can see what many of us once thought was pretty cutting edge. ■

SnesPSP_TYL 0.4.2 Released!

Posted May 14, 2006 at 07:29PM by Pranav T.
Listed In: Homebrew Emulators, News, Super Nintendo SNES

679
Jump it up!

YoyoFR and Laxer3a have updated their amazing SNES emulator, SnesPSP_TYL. And as always, there's a long list of fixes and new features.

First, the fixes:

- Key combos are now allowed in-game when not assigned to a specific feature
- Annoying in-game popups should be gone
- Sound issues after loading a savestate should be gone
- Noise issue when starting a game fixed
- Now should exit without crashing on PSP 2.XX
- Uncompressed ROMs now have loading progress bar too
- Improved IPS patch handling, still not perfect. Try to IPS patch your game before putting them on PSP
- Credits screen fixed

BUZZ OFF!

The craziest app ever?

The PSP is always packed to the brim when we go away on holiday, but now we have yet another reason to take it with us when we go abroad, if only so we can find out if this new piece of homebrew actually works.

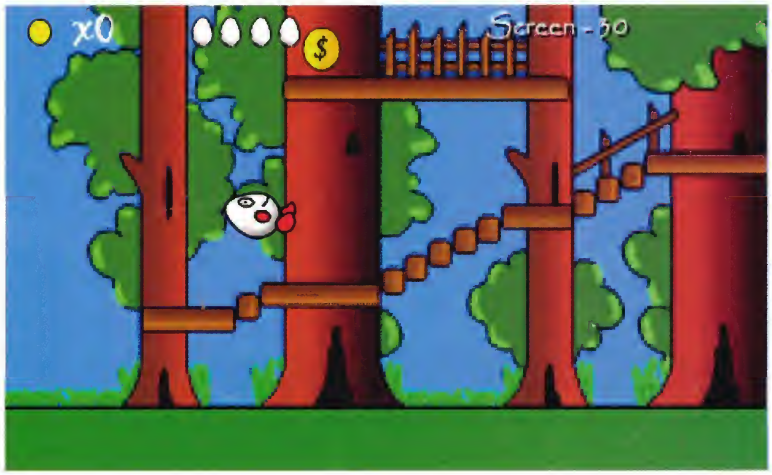
Developer Raydar claims that he has created an application for the PSP that will drive mosquitoes away from you. PSMoz is effectively an audio file that emits a sonic wall that allegedly drives the pesky insects crazy. The bizarre application has already had an update and now emits an even louder sound which Raydar promises will be even more effective against the wee pests.

Sadly, we've not been able to try it out ourselves, as we're stuck in the offices and the weather has been awful, but if any readers want to post their findings, be sure to let us know at the usual address. ■

GETTING DIZZY

Old game gets resurrected on 2.7 firmware

Now this is rather intriguing. PSP Updates forum member Shallan has been hard at work on a new version of *Treasure Island Dizzy* that amazingly works on 2.7 firmware. Originally released in 1987, Shallan's version is based on the NES game and is bound to make those that played it the first time around go misty-eyed with nostalgia. Sadly, there are quite a few bugs in this current version and the problems range from certain screens causing Dizzy to die, to some very questionable collision detection. While the program has been received with a fair amount of scorn on certain forums, what's so interesting is that at least we're starting to see some fascinating developments that we didn't expect a month ago. Just like nature, it would appear that the PSP hackers always manage to find a way. ■

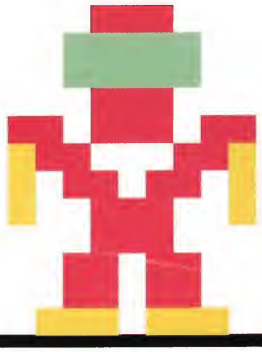


ROBOTRON: 2084

Thanks to the joys of emulation, every issue we'll be looking back at a classic game that we've been revisiting on our PSPs. This month we've become captivated by Eugene Jarvis' hellishly addictive Robotron: 2084

Robotron: 2084

Originally Released **1982** /
Developer **Digital Eclipse Software** /
Emulator Used **MAMEPSP**



Don't be fooled by its primitive looking visuals, complete lack of music and simple controls, *Robotron* remains one of the greatest shooters ever created and thanks to MAMEPSP you can now play it on your PSP.

First released in 1982 by Williams, *Robotron* was created by programming genius Eugene Jarvis and was the first game to appear on his new Vidkidz label (which Jarvis started up with Larry DeMar). Released the year after *Stargate* (Jarvis' sequel to *Defender*) *Robotron* was like nothing else in the arcades - mainly because of its unique control system. Unlike many other videogames that featured a joystick and several fire buttons, a *Robotron* cabinet simply housed two joysticks - one for movement, the other for firing. So all you had to do was move around the screen and shoot at any enemies? Simple... right? Well not really, because *Robotron* is one of the most intense shooters that we've ever played, and even now, 24 years later, it remains an absolutely astounding piece of software.

Robotron's premise was simple in the extreme - defeat waves of enemies, whilst rescuing Earth's last human family. Of course, the reality was far different, mainly due to the sheer amount of enemies that Jarvis took delight in throwing at you. While the first level only featured a few enemies, the pace soon picks up and by Wave 5 you're facing deadly, missile-firing brains, simple grunts that will slowly home in on you and deadly spheroids that boast extremely accurate laser fire. Needless to say the ability to be able to move and fire in any direction on the fly greatly helps your mission. Indeed, mastery of *Robotron*'s twin controllers is tantamount if you want to make any real progress on the later stages. Later, waves are filled with a ridiculous amount of enemies (which doesn't slow the game down one bit) and real skill is required to weave your way through them. Even more flair is needed if you intend to rescue the many humans which have been carelessly scattered around each stage.

At the start of each wave you'll have two seconds to spot potential trouble spots and locate the stranded humans before everything starts moving. The biggest benefit of saving humans is that it's a great way of boosting your score. The first rescued person grants you 1,000 points, the second 2,000, until a fifth captured human gives you a grand total of 5,000 points. Subsequent rescues immediately award you with 5,000 points but this will reset once a life is lost. It's not until you're a few waves in, and are frantically weaving around enemies in a desperate attempt to reach the stage's humans before they're killed that you truly start to realise *Robotron*'s majesty, and it's perfectly captured for an eternity on your lovely new PSP. ■

Darran Jones

Other great arcade games we've been playing this month

MR. DO!
Universal's *Mr Do!* is a wonderful mishmash of genres that really deserves its own full page. The idea of the game is to guide a colourful clown around a selection of different candy fields while collecting cherries and defeating your opponents.

WONDERBOY
A superb platformer that's delightfully old-school and will keep you playing right up until the very end. While the game may seem rather simplistic, the cute graphics, bouncing theme tune and amusing enemies will continually entertain.

MS PAC-MAN
Forget *Pac-Man*, as Namco's excellent sequel is far superior. More intelligent ghosts, a variety of different mazes and some cunning design all ensure that *Ms Pac-Man* is the game of choice if you want to waste a few hours on your PSP.

Sometimes so much is going on it makes your brain hurt

We'll admit that *Robotron* doesn't look great, but so what?

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DIRECTORY

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE NOT-SO-UGLY LIST OF PSP GAMING

Ape Escape: On The Loose

In the launch line-up this wasn't a bad platformer but with the release of *Daxter* and other superior titles, this is looking a little on the tired side.

Championship Manager 2006

There's nothing too wrong with this latest edition of *Champ Manager* but glance down at the score for *Football Manager* and you'll know which is better.

Dynasty Warriors

Predictably this was drastically cut down to fit on the PSP and despite still being a solid title it just lacks the epic flair of its console cousins.

Fight Night Round 3

This really is 'King of the Ring'! EA Sports has done an amazing job of shrinking their boxing franchise and it plays just as well as it does on the PS2.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Ape Academy	SCEE	1	85%		Simian silliness of the highest order and tremendously enjoyable to boot.
Ape Escape: On The Loose	SCEE	1	62%		Do we really need this old PSone game on our shiny new PSP?
Ape Escape P	SCEE	5	74%		A port of the old PSone version with virtually no improvements at all.
Archer MacLean's Mercury	Atari	1	82%		A tough challenge but there's no way you'll be able to tear yourself away.
Armored Core: Formula Front - Extreme Battle	505 Gamestreet	5	56%		Great for hardcore mech fans but impenetrable to everyone else.
ATV Offroad Fury: Blazin' Trails	SCEE	2	70%		Fun for a while, but only if you don't mind a rather limited experience.
Burnout Legends	EA	1	71%		A lack of draw distance ruins the fun, but it's still worth a play.
Breath Of Fire III	Capcom	4	76%		A decent effort but starting to show its age now.
Bust-A-Move Ghost	505 Gamestreet	5	85%		Hugely playable and addictive, though the 'spooky' treatment does nothing for the game.
Capcom Classics Collection: Remixed (Import)	Eidos	6	81%	N/A	A mixed bag of retro gaming where the good outweighs the bad.
Carol Vorderman's Sudoku	Xplosiv	6	69%		Better than Go! Sudoku but it's still just a Sudoku game.
Championship Manager	Eidos	2	80%		Addictive but there's plenty of room for improvement.
Championship Manager 2006	SEGA	5	81%		A little shy of Football Manager's greatness but not far off.
Coded Arms	Konami	1	64%		An okay attempt at an FPS, but not quite good enough.
Colin McRae Rally 2005 Plus	Codemasters	1	83%		Just like the PS2 version, but a bit smaller in size.
Crash Tag Team Racing	Vivendi	2	77%		*Bandicoot* fans should find this funny, innovative and perfect for the PSP.
Darkstalkers Chronicle: The Chaos Tower	Capcom	1	79%		A good game and a good port, but the controls are far from perfect.
Daxter	SCEE	4	89%		Not overly original but manages to be an addictive platformer all the same.
Dead To Rights: Reckoning	EA	3	63%		Reasonable blasting action that quickly gets repetitive.
Dragon Ball Z: Shin Budokai	Atari	5	69%		Too much button mashing mars what could have been a decent beat-'em-up
Dynasty Warriors	Koei	1	70%		Fun at first but even fans will be a little bit disappointed.
Everybody's Golf	SCEE	1	91%		Fun, addictive and perfect golfing in almost every way.
Exit	Ubisoft	3	83%		Enjoyable puzzle action that can get a bit frustrating.
F1 Grand Prix	SCEE	1	81%		Spot-on adaptation of the sport, worthy of a decent place on the grid.
FIFA 06	EA	1	76%		Possibly the best footy game on the PSP (after *Pro Evo 5*).
FIFA World Cup Germany 2006	EA	6	72%		A solid footy experience but lacking the flair to make it great.
Fight Night Round 3	EA	3	93%		An absolutely fantastic boxing simulation. You need this in your collection!
Fired Up	SCEE	1	59%		Just about playable, but not worth anything more than a passing look.
Football Manager Handheld	SEGA	4	88%		A cut-down version of the game that is still just as compelling as ever.
FIFA Street 2	EA	4	76%		The PSP is clearly the best place for *FIFA Street* - it's actually quite good.
From Russia With Love	EA	4	62%		A poor PS2 game that's even worse on PSP. Goodbye, Mr. Bond.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Go! Sudoku	SCEE	2	40%		An expensive way to play a game that simply needs pen and paper.
Gottlieb Pinball Classics	System 3	4	86%		A well-crafted title that provides hours of enjoyment.
Grand Theft Auto: Liberty City Stories	Rockstar	1	97%		Quite simply, the best there is. If you only buy one game, make it this.
Gripshift	Ubisoft	1	69%		An interesting kart-based game, with not enough racing.
Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire	EA	1	70%		It's good for the fans, but not many others, sadly.
Infected (Import)	THQ	4	77%		A gory horror-fest that gets slightly repetitive. Great multi-player though.
Kao Challengers	Atari	2	55%		Surprisingly good multi-player, but everything else about this is bad.
Key Of Heaven	SCEE	4	80%		Looks lovely and plays well too, sadly it's just too damn repetitive though.
Koloomn	505 Gamestreet	5	70%		Best played with a friend, as the single-player isn't particularly engaging.
Lemmings	SCEE	2	82%		The suicidal critters are back and they're just as good as you remember.
Lord Of The Rings Tactics, The	EA	1	74%		A decent effort from EA, but it falls short of its potential, unfortunately.
Lumines	Ubisoft	1	88%		Delightful to watch and addictive to boot – this really is puzzle heaven.
Madden NFL 06	EA	2	76%		Too much is missing from the PS2 version for this to get top marks.
Marvel Nemesis: Rise Of The Imperfects	EA	1	73%		A reasonable beat-'em-up, but flawed and nowhere near as good as it sounds.
Me And My Katamari (Import)	EA	3	91%		Quirky, crazy and bizarre but you'll love it.
MediEvil: Resurrection	SCEE	1	67%		Big on personality, if not on gameplay. A disappointing return for Sir Dan.
MegaMan Maverick Hunter X	Capcom	4	82%		Rock hard but great fun once you get to grips with it.
MegaMan Powered Up	Capcom	3	79%		A decent effort but this isn't the best MegaMan game on PSP.
Metal Gear Acid	Konami	1	82%		Tough to learn, but an original slice of action for fans.
Metal Gear Acid 2 (Import)	Konami	5	91%		Fixes all the flaws of the first game, absolutely essential!
Midnight Club 3: DUB Edition	Rockstar	1	70%		If 'pimping rides' is your thing then look no further.
Midway Arcade Treasures Extended Play	Ubisoft	4	77%	N/A	A strong compilation with some real classics on board.
Monster Hunter Freedom	Capcom	5	79%		Some frustration and boredom at first but ultimately a great adventure.
MX Vs ATV Unleashed: On The Edge	THQ	5	65%		A so-so racer that is fun for a while but ultimately an unfulfilling game.
NBA Ballers: Rebound	Midway	5	88%		Nice to look at and fun to play, a great b-ball game.
NBA Street: Showdown	EA	1	87%		A great conversion of a solid game that's excellent in multi-player.
Need For Speed Most Wanted	EA	1	68%		Not particularly good, but it's still perfectly adequate all the same.
Need For Speed Underground Rivals	EA	1	61%		'Pimped' to the post by the superior *Midnight Club*.
NFL Street 2: Unleashed	EA	1	76%		Fun but still filled with the flaws of the PS2 version.
OutRun 2006: Coast 2 Coast	SEGA	3	93%		Looks amazing, plays even better. Yet another great racing title.
PoPoLoCrois	Agetec	3	69%		Far too simplistic to satisfy the majority of RPG fans.
PQ: Practical Intelligence Quotient	D3Publisher	4	75%		An original piece of brain-bending puzzle action that can get frustrating.
Pro Evolution Soccer 5	Konami	2	79%		The best footy game on PSP but a few flaws hold it back from classic status.

Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire

Harry's first PSP adventure is a reasonable amount of fun but if you're not a fan then this will hold absolutely no appeal.

The Lord Of The Rings Tactics

This isn't a bad RPG but certainly isn't the best that can be found on PSP. Contains plenty of good ideas, that could be expanded on in a sequel.

Midway Arcade Treasures Extended Play

One of the best retro collections we've seen yet, helped greatly by the presence of the first three *Mortal Kombat* games.

NFL Street 2: Unleashed

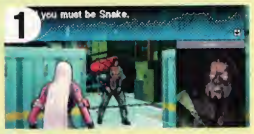
If you don't want all the complicated tactics of *Madden* but want a bit of fast-paced American Football action, then this is the perfect remedy.

KEY

Racing · Beat-'em-up · Sport · Action/Adventure
Platform · Shoot-'em-up · Puzzle · RPG/Strategy

TOP FIVE GAMES BEGINNING WITH M

1



Metal Gear Ac!d 2

You either love or hate this new card-based direction for Snake, but here at **Go>Play** we can't get enough.

2

Me & My Katamari

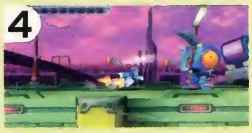
Simon hates it, Andy loves it and Tom can't decide. Such is the bizarreness of *Katamari*.

3

Metal Gear Ac!d

Maybe we should have picked a different letter, as Snake makes another appearance in the top five. Difficult to learn but rewarding to play, everyone should give *Ac!d* a go at least once.

4



MegaMan Maverick Hunter X

Of the two *MegaMan* games available this is the better, but only just. It's very hard though, which is irritating.

5

Monster Hunter Freedom

Once you eventually get into this RPG and things start to happen you'll discover that it's actually quite good. Persevere with it.

TITLE	PUBLISHER	ISSUE	SCORE	GENRE	THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
Pursuit Force	SCEE	1	89%		High-speed hi-jinks that really show off the PSP.
Puyo Pop Fever	SEGA	6	68%		Not the best puzzler on PSP but it's a decent effort.
Ridge Racer	SCEE	1	92%		*Ridge* is back on form with a truly fantastic PSP debut.
Samurai Warriors: State Of War	Koei	4	75%		Provides a decent slice of hack 'n' slash fun, but it's nothing particularly special.
Sims 2, The	EA	2	86%		*The Sims* is always great and that doesn't change on the PSP.
SOCOM US Navy SEALs: Fireteam Bravo	SCEE	4	91%		A few control problems don't mar this excellent tactical shoot-'em-up.
Spider-Man 2	Activision	1	47%		Spidey's latest outing sadly pales in comparison to the PS2 version.
Splinter Cell: Essentials	Ubisoft	3	80%		Not a bad first outing for Sam Fisher, but we were expecting more.
SpongeBob SquarePants: The Yellow Avenger	THQ	6	52%		Buy the movie on UMD instead, it's cheaper and a lot more fun.
Star Wars Battlefront II	LucasArts	2	80%		Controls take getting used to but still an absolute blast.
Street Fighter Alpha 3 MAX	Capcom	3	80%		Arcade-perfect port let down by the awkward controls.
Street Riders	Ubisoft	5	56%		*187 Ride Or Die* with a different name but in reality, still just as crap.
SSX On Tour	EA	4	87%		Great single player, great multi-player, and looks to die for.
Syphon Filter: Dark Mirror	SCEE	6	93%		A fantastic game on nearly every level, miss this at your peril.
Tales Of Eternia	Ubisoft	3	84%		Despite offering little that's new, it still manages to be highly addictive.
Talkman	SCEE	6	72%		A great idea but there aren't enough phrases to make it an indispensable buy.
TOCA Race Driver 2	Codemasters	1	81%		Carbon copy from the PS2, but it manages to impress.
Tokobot	Take 2	3	72%		A nice idea that doesn't really work as well as it should.
Tomb Raider: Legend	Eidos	6	78%		Some control issues let Lara down, but this is still a solid adventure.
Tony Hawk's Underground 2 Remix	Activision	1	70%		More of the usual boarding antics, let down by some rather dodgy controls.
Twisted Metal: Head On	SCEE	2	70%		Fun in multi-player but this game is plagued by annoying control issues.
Untold Legends: Brotherhood Of The Blade	SCEE	1	73%		A button-bashing RPG that unfortunately doesn't quite make the grade.
Untold Legends: The Warrior's Code (Import)	Ubisoft	6	78%		Offers nothing particularly original but fans will enjoy it.
Viewtiful Joe: Red Hot Rumble	Capcom	5	85%		A little mad on the eyes but still a great deal of fun.
Virtua Tennis World Tour	SEGA	1	90%		One of the most addictive games on the PSP to date, an essential buy.
WipEout Pure	SCEE	1	88%		Fast, beautiful and intense futuristic racing game.
World Poker Tour	2K Sports	5	81%		A great game for both poker veterans and newcomers.
World Snooker Challenge 2005	SEGA	1	89%		Filled with content and plays surprisingly well.
World Tour Soccer: Challenge Edition	SCEE	1	71%		No trailblazer, but worthy of Premier League status.
Worms: Open Warfare	THQ	5	84%		Worms back to its 2D best with a solid single-player experience and fantastic multi-player.
WRC	SCEE	1	65%		Solid but lacklustre racing coming a firm second place behind Colin.
WWE Smackdown Vs RAW 2006	THQ	2	90%		A perfectly formed miniature version of the PlayStation2 grappler.
X-Men Legends II: Rise Of Apocalypse	Activision	2	69%		Fun for fans of the super-mutants but far from perfect.

KEY

Racing · Platform · Beat-'em-up · Shoot-'em-up · Sport · Puzzle · Action/Adventure · RPG/Strategy

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